NATIONAL AND STATE VETERANS' CEMETERIES

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MAY 20, 1999

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NATIONAL AND STATE VETERANS' CEMETERIES

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1999

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:07 a.m., in room 340, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Terry Everett (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Everett, Buyer, and Brown.

Also Present: Representatives Peterson, Evans, and Callahan.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN EVERETT

Mr. EVERETT. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning.

This Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing will examine the maintenance of national cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery. We will also examine the VA's planning for future cemetery needs, including construction of new cemeteries. This is a good time to be taking stock, as Memorial Day approaches.

"Show me the manner in which a Nation or a community cares for its dead, I will measure exactly the sympathies of a people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals." Those words were attributed to William E. Gladstone in American Century, 1938. They are as true today as they were then.

One of the most visible benefits a veteran will receive is a burial plot in a national or State cemetery. These cemeteries are tangible evidence of the country's appreciation for the sacrifices made by these men and women. We have a special debt to those who risked their lives for our liberty. Burial in a national or State cemetery is the final remembrance that forever honors the veteran who served his country in the Armed Forces.

Our country is at a point where we have one of the greatest demands in history for national cemetery space. The average age of our veteran population is rising, and World War II veterans are dying at more than 1,000 a day.

Despite the demographic trend for the next decade, the VA seems to have no plans to construct new cemeteries. Unless there are such plans, the VA is reneging on an understanding with the Veterans' Affairs Committee that when the committee increased funding for new State cemeteries from 50 to 100 percent of initial cost, the VA would plan for new national cemeteries. The committee delivered the State cemetery funding increase, but the VA has cer-

tainly not yet delivered a plan for new national cemeteries. We would like to know why not.

Our witnesses today will be the Honorable Helen Chenoweth of Idaho, Veteran Service Organizations and Military Associations, Directors of State Veteran Affairs Departments, and senior officials from the Department of the Army and VA.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the statements of the Honorable Mike Doyle, a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the statement of Sidney Daniels, Deputy Director of the National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

[The prepared statement of Congressman Doyle appears on p. 67.]

[The prepared statement of Mr. Daniels appears on p. 129.]

Mr. EVERETT. I now recognize the Ranking Democrat, Ms. Brown, for any opening remarks she may have.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORRINE BROWN

Ms. BROWN. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. As we approach Memorial Day, it is fitting that we should hold this hearing on the state of veterans' cemeteries.

In less than 2 weeks, America will honor her heroes, those who have enabled this country to remain free for over 200 years. A major question before this subcommittee this morning is in what condition will the families and friends of those heroes find their national shrines we call veterans' cemeteries.

Mr. Chairman, every time I visit Arlington National Cemetery, I am taken with that solemn special place. I have been troubled, however, by reports of needed maintenance being deferred because of inadequate funding. Today, we will be examining those maintenance needs as well as reports of deferred maintenance at VA national cemeteries.

Mr. Chairman, another, and perhaps more troubling question this morning, involves the apparent lack of preparation by the VA for the burial needs of America's veterans over the next 10 to 20 years. Today, nearly ⅓ of America's veterans are not being served by a burial option in a national or a State veterans' cemetery within a reasonable distance, 75 miles of their residence. This is unacceptable, period.

Tom Brokaw has referred to our aging veteran population as the greatest generation. We cannot fail to provide these men and women the final and possible only veterans' benefit that they will receive—burial in a veterans' cemetery.

By the year 2008, VA projects that the veterans' death rate will peak at 620,000 a year. Yet for fiscal year 2000, the Administration did not request a single dollar to even plan for more national cemeteries. This is distressing, especially in my State of Florida, that has been long identified by the VA as one of the top areas in the country in which needed burial space for veterans is the greatest.

I will be interested in hearing not only from the VA on this issue of burial-space planning, but also from the State directors of Veterans Affairs representing North Carolina, Wisconsin, and my State of Florida. New national cemeteries must be built, but State cemeteries built and equipped by VA can complement the national cemetery system.

Last year, Congress expended the authority of VA's State Cemetery Grants Program. Now VA can pay 100 percent of the cost of constructing a State veterans' cemetery plus the setup cost for all of the equipment, including computers, that a State would need for veterans' cemeteries. I am interested in hearing how effective this program is now.

Of course, I am always looking forward to the insight and testimony of our veterans and military service organizations. I want to thank all of our witnesses in advance for being here today. Your testimony on the eve of Memorial Day will help the subcommittee better fulfill its responsibilities of overseeing our Nation's solemn commitment to our veterans.

I request that my statement in support of H.R. 1628, my bill that would establish a national cemetery for veterans in the Miami, FL metropolitan area, be included in the record.

Mr. EVERETT. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Congresswoman Brown appears on p. 66.]

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. I would now like to recognize the Chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee for the House Armed Services Committee, my good friend Steve Buyer.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STEPHEN E. BUYER

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Chairman, I just want to again thank you for your focus on these types of issues. We worked very hard not only in the Armed Services Committee but with the VA on the issue to ensure that our veterans receive an honored burial. So as we also downsize the military, we want to make sure that we pay homage to those who gave great sacrifice to this country. The responsibilities go beyond just the burial, they go into perpetuity so long as we remain a free Nation.

So I appreciate your focus on this, and I know that this has been difficult for the VA. Let's be very pragmatic. The administration has cut their budgets. We come back along here, and we are plussing up their budgets up to $1.7 billion in discretionary funds, and I appreciate your leadership, Mr. Chairman, to do that, but at some point in time this administration has got to get the signal here.

I yield back.

Mr. EVERETT. Before I welcome our witnesses, we have a slide presentation of three national cemeteries that the subcommittee staff visited and will show examples of deferred maintenance. I think you will be interested in seeing this. [Slides]

Ms. LEACH. The following slides were taken at Arlington, Long Island and Calverton National cemeteries.

The pictures at Arlington are examples of deferred maintenance at the cemetery and include buckling and uneven walkways in front of the Tomb of the Unknowns (see figure 1), and water from a leaky roof that caused a hole in the ceiling in the reception building in back of the Tomb of the Unknowns (see figure 2).

The cemetery has roads that are also in need of repair as well as roads that have recently been resurfaced (see figures 3 and 4). Cracked and broken flagstone walkways to the columbarium and

inside the columbarium courtyards. This is an unsightly and inappropriate appearance as well as a safety hazard (see figures 5 to 7).

The equipment inside the control room that operates the eternal flame and the pool at the respective Kennedy grave sites, this is the original equipment and needs to be replaced (see figure 8).

Long Island National Cemetery is the largest and among the oldest in the national cemetery system (see figure 9). Deferred maintenance at the cemetery include dirty and misaligned headstones (see figures 10 and 11). However, this maintenance problem has recently been addressed by the current cemetery director. He has implemented a headstone cleaning plan where cemetery employees clean up to approximately 10,000 headstones each month (see figure 12).

Long Island also has roads that are in need of repair (see figure 13). The cemetery also lacks covered storage for its grounds maintenance equipment (see figure 14). Letting this equipment sit out in the open decreases its useful life and increases its maintenance costs.

Calverton National Cemetery opened as Long Island was closing and instituted changes based on the lessons learned from Long Island and also introduced innovations developed by its staff (see figure 15). The interment shelter is the site of the ceremony at the cemetery (see figures 16 and 17). One of the innovations at Calverton is the cart at the top of the screen, where they place rollers on the back which reduce the muscle injuries to cemetery employees (see figure 18).

The scene at the bottom is a cemetery operations. Calverton conducts approximately 35 interments each day (see figure 19).

Here is another example of the innovations at Calverton. The cemetery employees attached a weed trimmer to the tractor mowers. This innovation saved time and labor (see figure 20). Also, based on lessons learned from Long Island, headstones are not placed near trees and, therefore, keeps the headstones cleaner for longer periods of time (see figure 21).

Figure 1

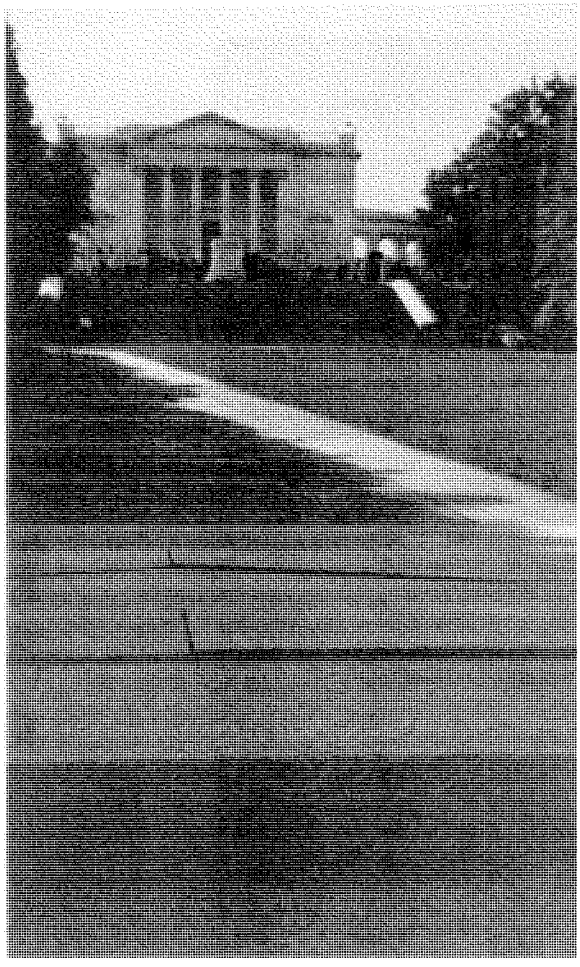


Figure 2

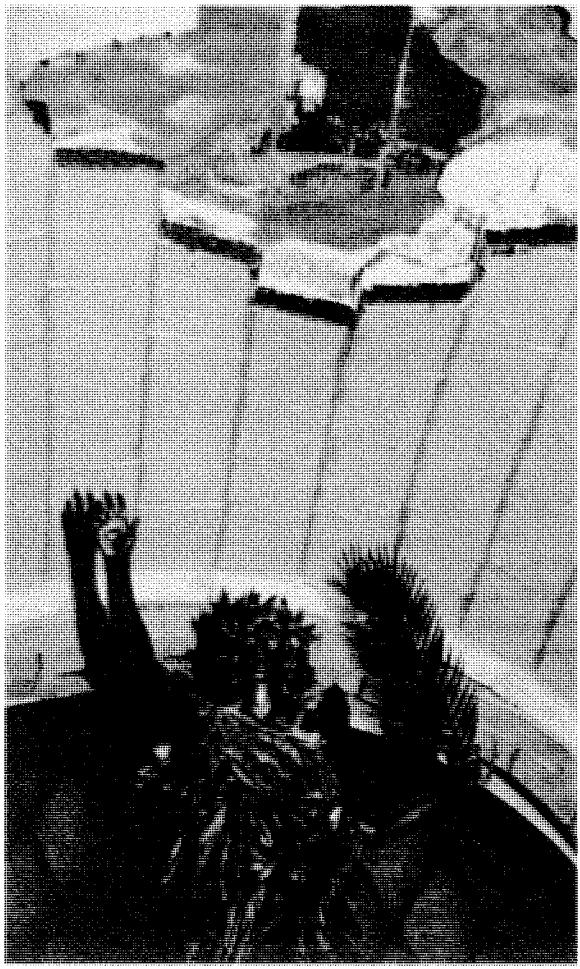


Figure 3

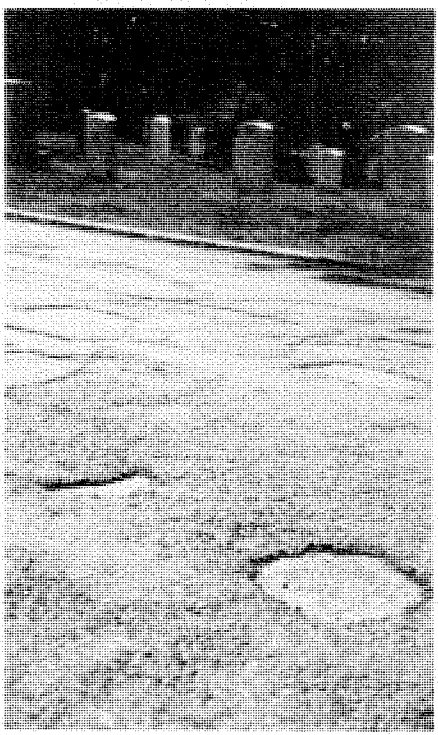


Figure 4

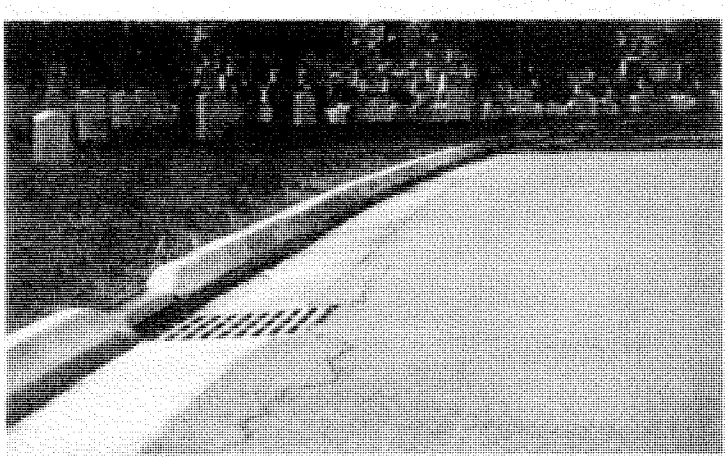


Figure 5

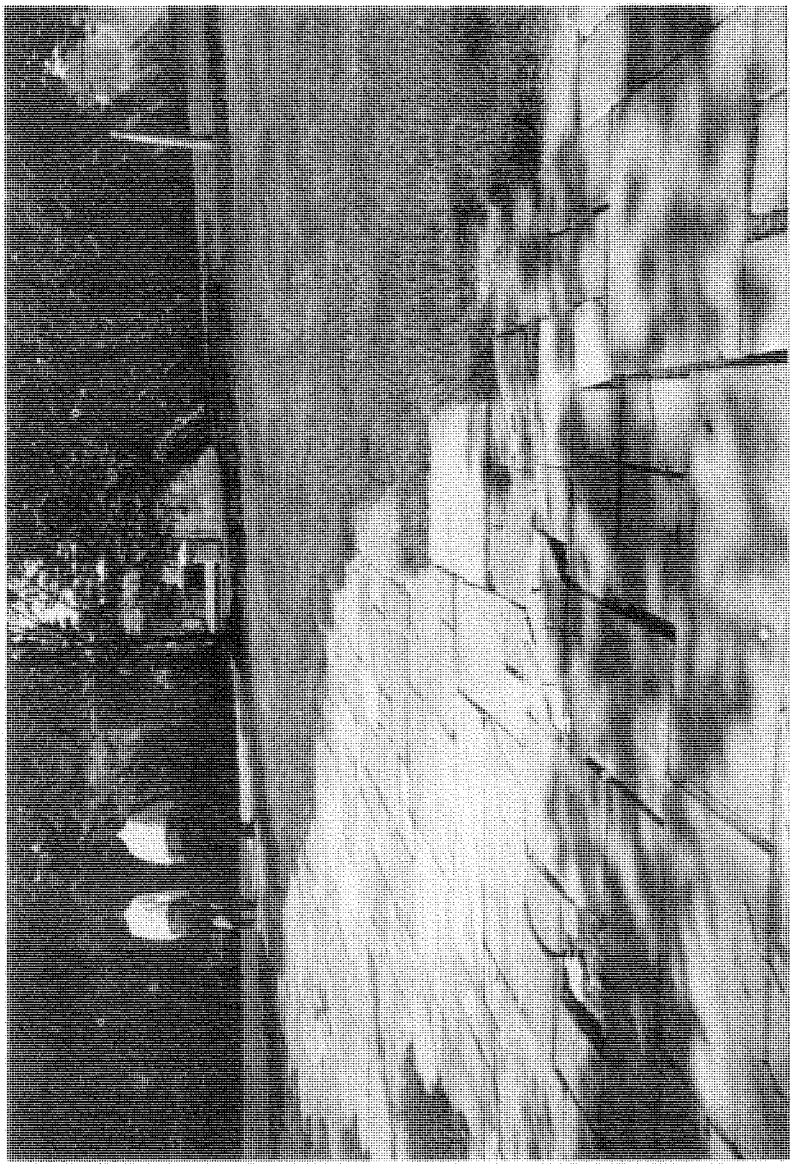


Figure 6

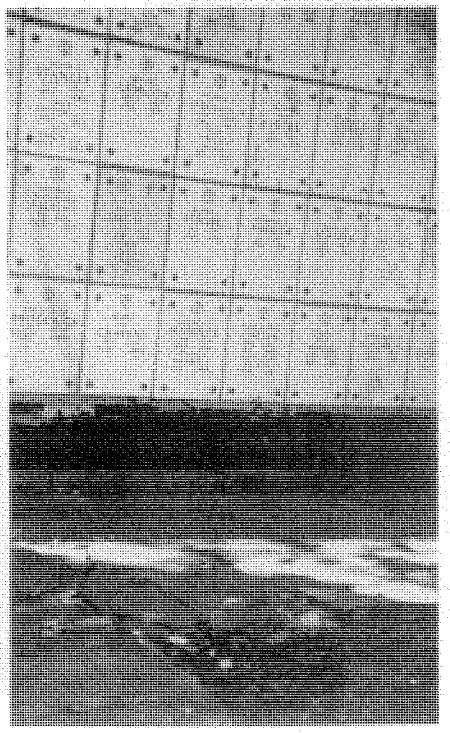


Figure 7

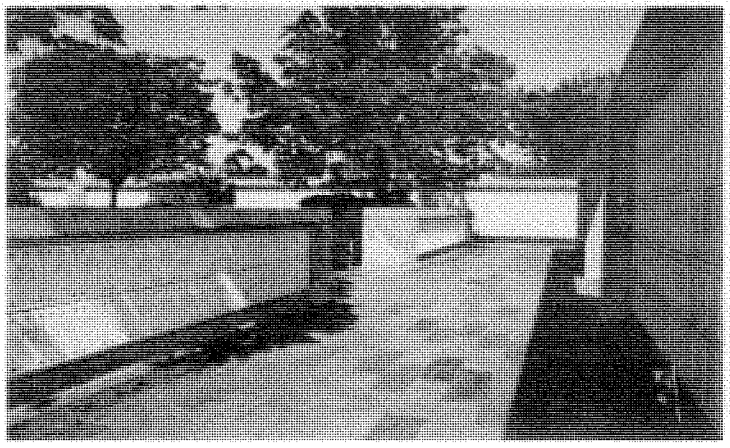


Figure 8

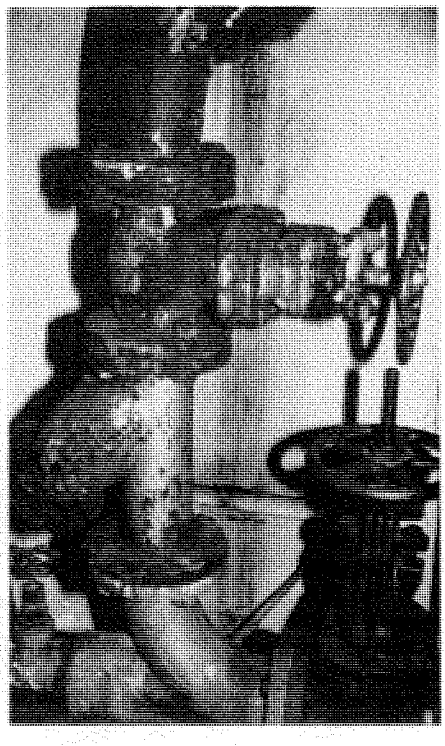


Figure 9

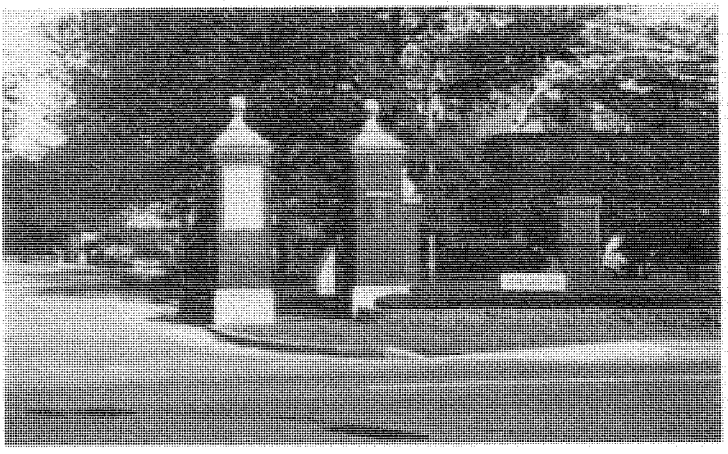


Figure 10

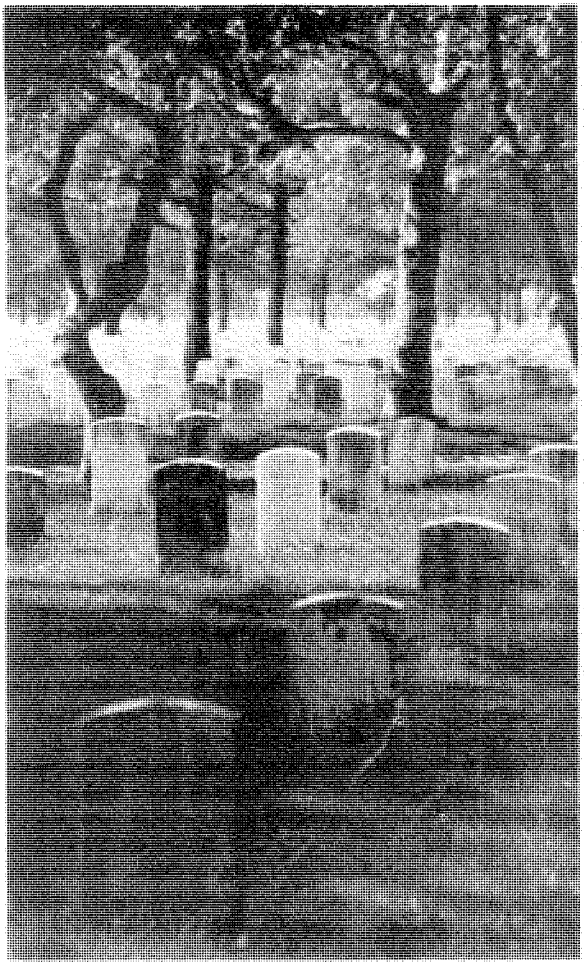


Figure 11

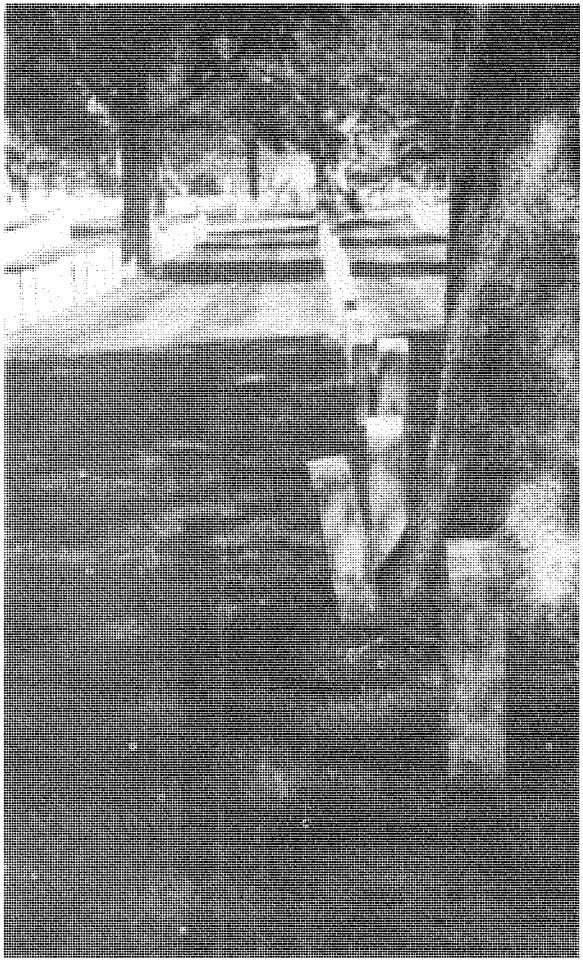


Figure 12

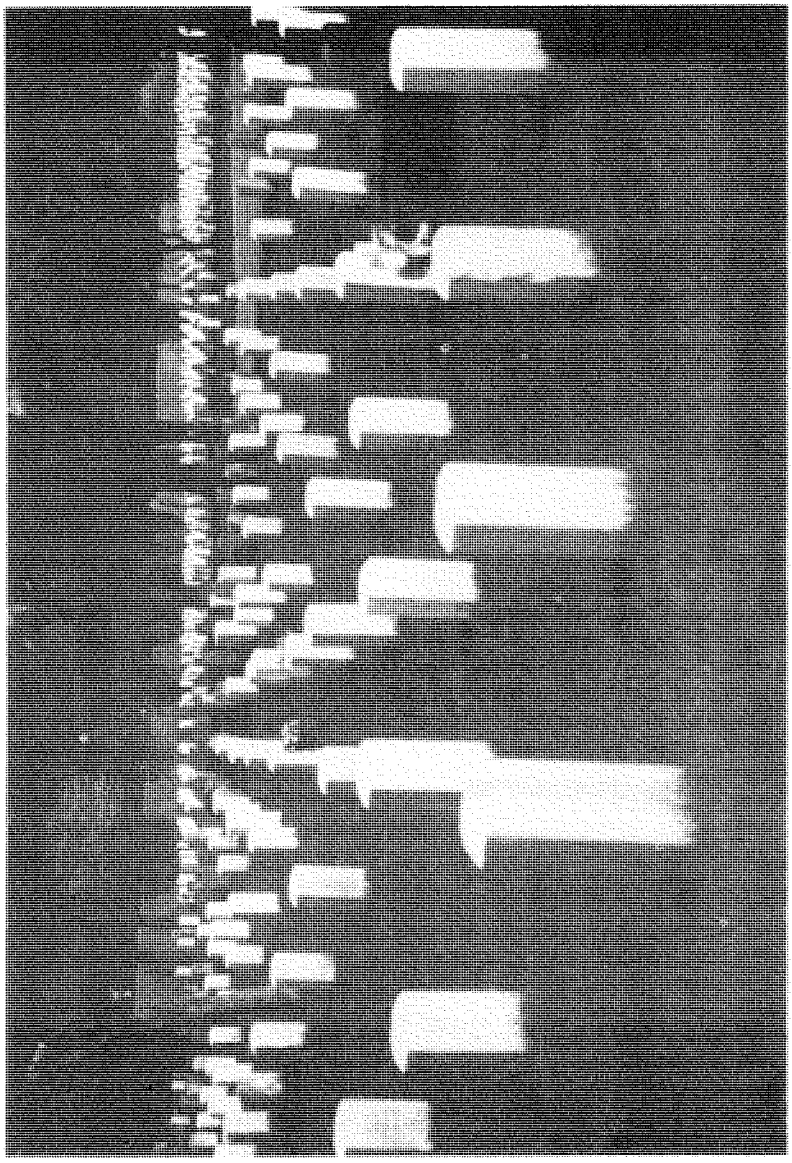


Figure 13

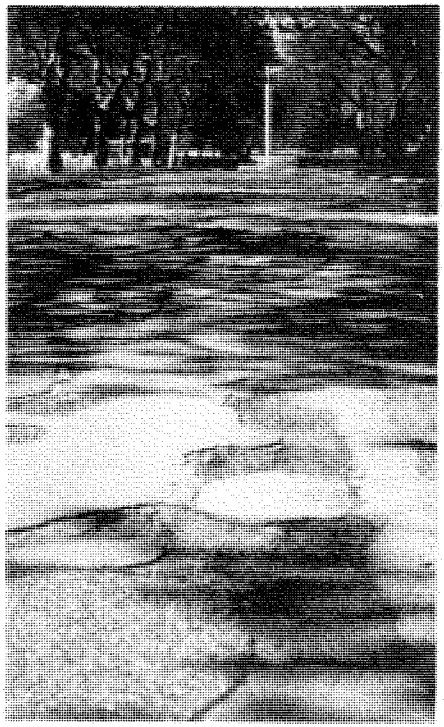


Figure 14



Figure 15

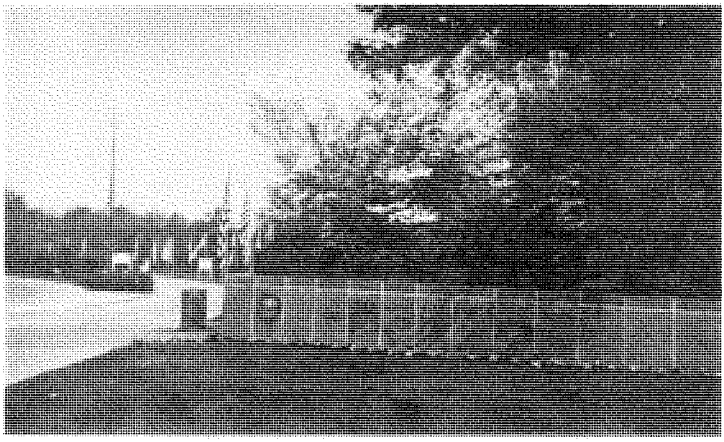


Figure 16

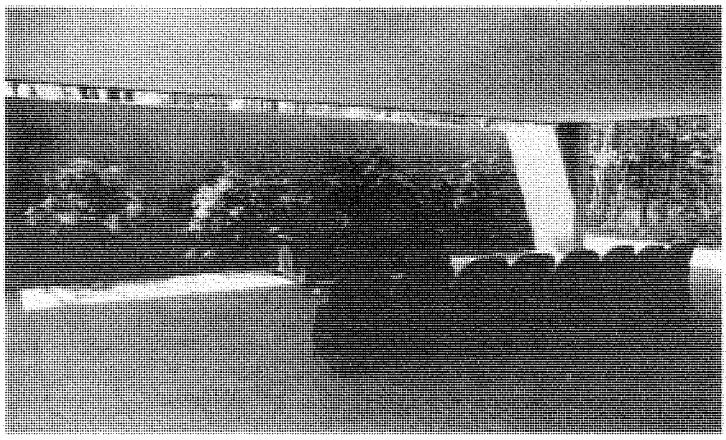


Figure 17

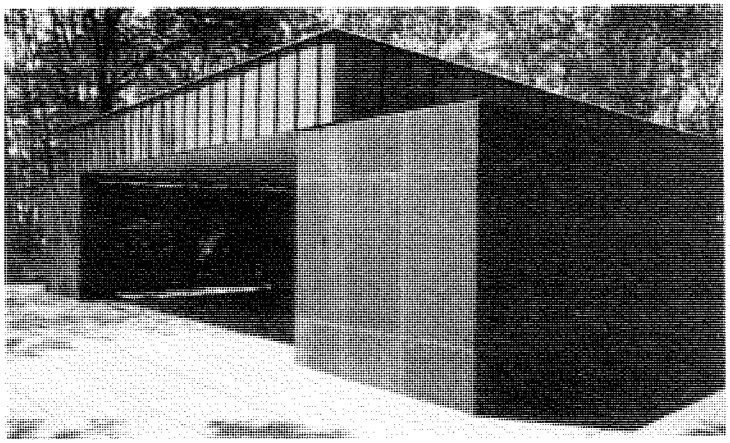


Figure 18



Figure 19

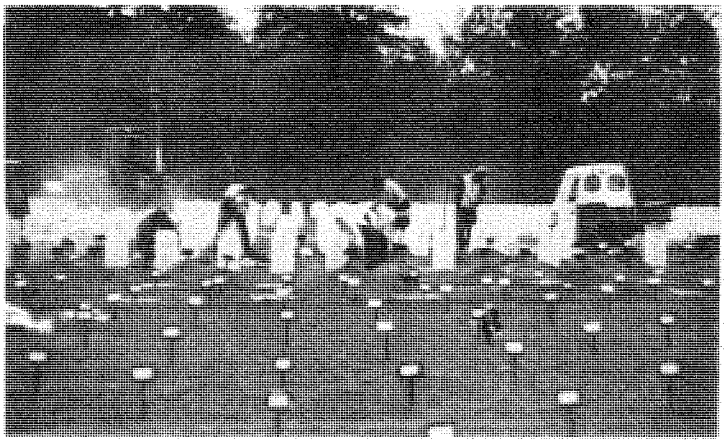


Figure 20

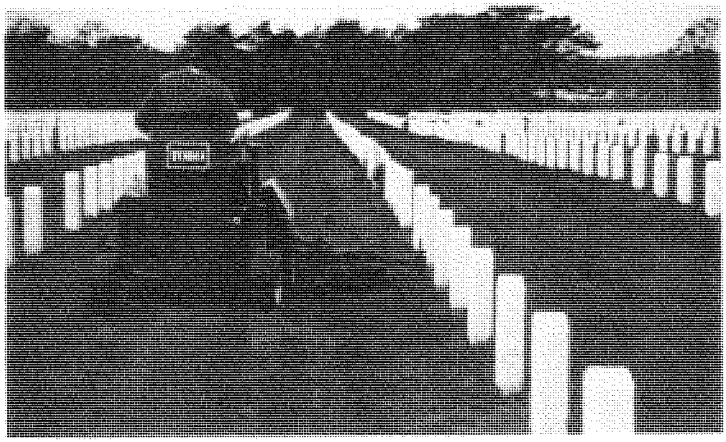
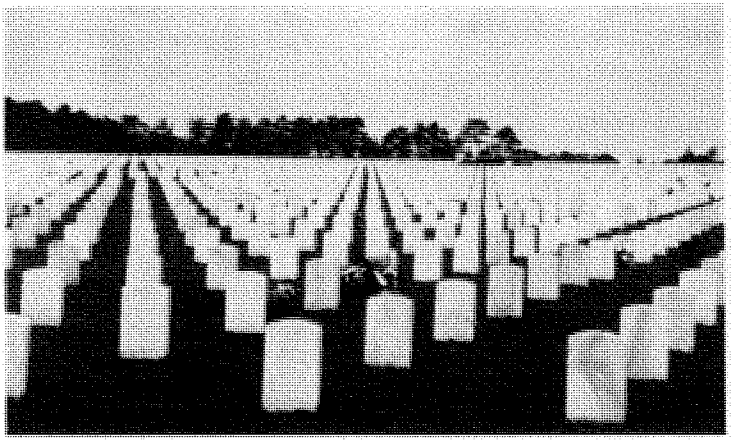


Figure 21



Currently ⅓ of veterans are not served by a cemetery within a reasonable distance of their home. By the year 2008, veterans' deaths will peak at 620,000, and a significant number of cemeteries in the cemetery system are more than 100 years old and in need of repair.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you. If we can have the lights back on now.

I would like to welcome all our witnesses testifying here today and ask each witness to limit their oral testimony to 5 minutes. The complete statement will be entered and made a part of the official hearing record. I have asked we hold all our questions until the entire panel of each panel has testified.

It is a great pleasure now to welcome and recognize the Honorable Helen Chenoweth, representing the First District of Idaho, and who is also a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. HELEN CHENOWETH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for inviting me to testify before your committee today. I am so very grateful for the work that you are doing and the members of the subcommittee are doing to review the veterans' cemetery system. It is vitally needed.

This is an issue that is timely and so very important to not only my constituents but all Americans because we expect our veterans to fight for our Nation overseas and here at home even, but it breaks my heart when we find that our veterans have to fight with our Nation.

In Idaho, veterans are forced into one final choice between their home and their patriotism. No Idaho veteran may be laid to rest in his home State, in Idaho, in a dedicated field. This is because my home State is the only State in the Nation that does not have a veterans' cemetery.

Veterans represent approximately 10 percent of Idaho's population and there are nearly 100,000 combat veterans in Idaho, a third of whom served our Nation in World War II. On average, World War II veterans are 76 years old in my State. These heroes are now passing away. This summer, when veterans' organizations call the roll of those who have died in the last year, they will read 2,300 names, and not one will be able to be buried in an Idaho veterans' cemetery.

Mr. Chairman, I find this to be a disgrace, and that is why I am introducing legislation which will provide Idaho with a veterans' cemetery. This bill answers a critical need that Idaho faces. In pressing for a veterans' cemetery, I know I have the support of the entire Idaho delegation, our governor, the State veterans' organizations, the Idaho legislature and the Chairman of the full committee, Mr. Stump.

In fact, last month, the Idaho legislature passed Joint Memorial 1, which urgently requested a veterans' cemetery, and I would like to ask unanimous consent that that be included in the record.

Mr. EVERETT. Without objection.

[The attachment appears on p. 72.]

Mrs. CHENOWETH. It states, and I quote, "It is fitting and proper that a grateful Nation should provide a burial site within a reasonable distance from the home of those Idahoans and others residing in the northeastern States who honorably served their country in a time of emergency."

In a time when we were threatened, our veterans defended us. In a time when we were afraid, our veterans kept their courage. In a time when we have discarded patriotism, our veterans still salute the flag, honor their commander in chief and defend liberty. Our Veterans are our heroes, and they deserve the final honor of burial in an Idaho veterans' cemetery.

One final note, Mr. Chairman, I think that you and I and the other members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee understand that there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of active duty military today and the treatment of the veterans of yesterday's service. Retention, morale, readiness, these words are euphemisms used to disguise the real problem our military faces. Our servicemen, both past and present, cannot have faith that their government will take good care of them.

A sign in front of the Boise Veterans Medical Center reads, "The price of freedom is visible here." Indeed, it is. Unfortunately, in our society, a select few pay that price. They are veterans. And we must show them, our heroes of past conflict and those who stand guard as we speak, that we care and that we are grateful and that we will not fail them.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for giving me this opportunity to testify, and I ask each member of this committee to help me pay respect to the men and women who have secured our freedoms in Idaho. I ask for your support in helping Idaho to recognize and properly honor its brave defenders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much for your concern for the veterans of Idaho as well as your concerns for the veterans across the Nation.

I appreciate the work that you have done in the first district of Idaho, and we are going to have special questions or specific questions about national or State cemeteries for the VA panel when they appear.

So thank you very much for your testimony today.

[The prepared statement of Congresswoman Chenoweth, with attachment, appears on p. 70.]

Mr. EVERETT. I would ask panel two to please have a seat, and I would like to welcome or recognize Philip Wilkerson, from the American Legion; Joy Ilem and Rick Surratt from the Disabled American Veterans; Rick Weidman, from the Vietnam Veterans of America; Colonel Robert Norton, from the Retired Officers Association; and Larry Rhea, from the Non Commissioned Officers Association.

STATEMENTS OF PHILIP R. WILKERSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, VETERANS' AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION, THE AMERICAN LEGION; JOY ILEM, ASSOCIATE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS; RICHARD WEIDMAN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA; COLONEL ROBERT F. NORTON, USA (RET.), DEPUTY DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, THE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION; AND LARRY D. RHEA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. EVERETT. And, Mr. Surratt, I believe you wanted to introduce Ms. Ilem.

Mr. SURRATT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to introduce Joy Ilem, Associate National Legislative Director, who is a new member of DAV's legislative staff and who will be our witness this morning.

Joy is an army veteran. She began her career with the DAV as one of our national service officers, but was quickly promoted to serve on our staff at our Board of Veterans' Appeals Office where she represented veterans in their appeals to the board.

We believe her experience in veterans' claims will be an asset in the work we do with this subcommittee and the full committee. We already have her involved in several important issues, but we expect that her appearance here today on behalf of the DAV will more formally begin what will be a long and beneficial relationship with you and your staff.

With that, Mr. Chairman, if you are ready, I will let Joy proceed with her statement. Thank you for recognizing me for this introduction.

Mr. EVERETT. It is my pleasure. Miss Ilem, it is a pleasure to have you here, and please proceed.

I would ask all panel members, though, to hold their statements to 5 minutes, their oral statements. Your complete statement will be made a part of the official record.

STATEMENT OF JOY ILEM

Ms. ILEM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you and present the views of the Disabled American Veterans concerning the National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our membership has a genuine interest in ensuring that national and State cemeteries throughout the Nation, including Arlington, are adequately funded and maintained to meet the increasing burial needs of the veteran population.

Veterans should be assured of this final honor without concern that the resources necessary to provide this important benefit may be unavailable. Adequate funding and long-range planning are essential to the success of NCA's mission. One of the NCA's primary goals is to ensure that burial in an open national or State veterans' cemetery is an available option for all eligible veterans and their family members. However, of the 115 existing national cemeteries, only 57 are able to provide the full range of services.

NCA projects that interments will peak at approximately 620,000 in the year 2008. Therefore, the expansion of NCA over the next

10 years is critical to meeting the significant burial demands that will be placed on the system in the near future. The absence of such a long-range focus is one of DAV's main concerns. The time for NCA to act is now.

The system's ability to meet its primary goal is contingent upon a comprehensive, long-term planning strategy and sound implementation methodology, coupled with adequate funding. Congress and the VA must commit to a policy of ensuring adequate burial space for all eligible veterans and family members who desire burial in a national or State veterans' cemetery.

A matter of equal importance is adequate funding for the State Cemetery Grants Program, which is managed by NCA. The current program provides 100 percent funding for State cemetery construction to meet the rising demands of interment rate. However, the $11 million budget appropriation for the program, approved when the Federal grant was 50 percent of the total cost, has not been increased.

Mr. Chairman, we are aware that there has been an increase in interest in the grant program based on the current 100 percent funding level. However, it is unclear if adequate funding is available for all approved cemetery grant applications. The subcommittee may be interested in approaching NCA to determine if funding for any approved applications has been delayed due to budgetary constraints.

In terms of meeting future construction needs, NCA indicated that VA plans to continue cemetery construction under both the State Cemetery Grants Program and the national system. However, there is no official plan to develop any additional national cemeteries during fiscal year 2000. NCA acknowledged it would be able to function in a challenged capacity, given VA's $97 million budget proposal for fiscal year 2000 for NCA.

As an organization dedicated to the welfare of our Nation's disabled veterans, we recognize the need for development of additional national cemeteries, and we appreciate the introduction of H.R. 1476, the National Cemetery Act of 1999 by Representative Lane Evans.

Of course, maintenance of existing cemeteries is of equal importance and concern. Successive years of restrained budgets have forced the system to focus on high priority projects and often defer important preventive ground maintenance and infrastructure repairs. Special maintenance concerns of older cemeteries, at which we often see long-standing deficiencies, should not be neglected. Increased funding is essential to acquire additional full-time personnel to carry out important maintenance projects and maintain cemeteries as befitting national shrines.

Contracting cemetery maintenance is, of course, an alternative option. Arlington Cemetery utilizes contracted services and provides us with the benefit of experience by which to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of contracting. Expanded use of contracts for specific ground maintenance functions has allowed Arlington to achieve operational efficiencies. However, the current budget for Arlington is inadequate to meet the high maintenance standards expected at the cemetery. To ensure critical grounds maintenance needs are addressed, increased funding is necessary to hire addi-

tional contract management personnel to oversee expanded contract functions.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my oral remarks, and I will be happy to answer any questions that you or members of the subcommittee may have. Thank you.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ilem appears on p. 77.]

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Weidman, you are sitting next to Ms. Ilem, so why don't you just proceed.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD WEIDMAN

Mr. WEIDMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate your leadership in holding this hearing today.

Perhaps the one veterans' benefit that all veterans, regardless of social or economic group, regardless of where they served or what they did in the military share, is the right to a burial with military honors and in a national cemetery. It is, in that sense, like death itself, the great equalizer.

The concerns that the Vietnam Veterans of America has stem from our ardent belief that the national cemeteries must be kept up to the highest standards and that this is a national responsibility and a national obligation and, when it slips, is a national problem.

It is not a problem with the veterans' community, it is a problem that the Nation has. As you correctly pointed out so well in your opening statement, Mr. Chairman, a Nation that does not honor its dead, just simply is not honoring its ideals for which those people fought and died, in many cases, but certainly had served so well.

The National Cemetery Administration, of course, is the agency that administers it. The demographics of that, with the death of the World War II veterans, is only putting increasing pressure on an agency that has increasingly diminished resources, particularly in light of the increasing workload.

If there was ever a time to honor and for the Congress to meet the independent budget figure for any aspect of VA it should be for the National Cemetery Administration for the current year and for the "out years," both for development of new spaces as well as for the maintenance of existing cemeteries within the system.

Not only has the staff been reduced, but what is not necessarily visibly apparent at Calverton and at other cemeteries around the country is extraordinary reliance on compensated work therapy patients in order to be able to accomplish the work. VVA urges you to look closely at that issue in the future, as to an overreliance from these CWT workers, with no "ladders up" from that CWT status to full-time, permanent employment.

One of the things that we would also urge you take into account in your deliberations is to go back to the demographics section of the Veterans' Administration. The demographics of the death rate World War II veterans is fairly well-documented, as are that of Korean vets. VVA has indications that the rate of deaths among Vietnam veterans, particularly those who served "in-country" is accelerating, Mr. Chairman. As many as half, potentially, of Vietnam "in-country" veterans will have expired in the period 2008 to 2010. That upset us enough, and we had confidence enough in the esti-

mate, that we wrote to Secretary West and are negotiating with him on getting a mortality study that takes into account the "in-country effect" of Agent Orange and other problems that have caused that accelerating death rate.

VVA also joins you in urging that there be better planning. That is perhaps the most distressing part of this whole situation. VVA strongly urges that the Department of Veterans Affairs' NCA move forward to develop a plan. In talking with folks who were on congressional staff back in 1973–1974, when the VA assumed responsibility for all of the national cemeteries, the plan then was very simple, and that was to develop 10 additional cemeteries. They did that, in whole or in part, and that was the whole plan at that time. To date, there is not a comprehensive plan for the future when we need it most.

I see the orange light is on, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to raise the issue of military honors, which once again is a national problem. VVA urges this subcommittee to look at it very closely in the future because it is allied to the Nation's obligation to honor the men and women who have served it so well in the military, and to have that conversation with DOD and VA. It will take all of us in the future in order to ensure that military honors are provided to all veterans, irrespective of where their final resting place may be, in a national cemetery or elsewhere.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you for your leadership on this issue and so many others, and for allowing us to present our views.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Weidman appears on p. 82.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you. Mr. Wilkerson.

STATEMENT OF PHILIP R. WILKERSON

Mr. WILKERSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The American Legion appreciates your leadership in scheduling this hearing this morning. We are particularly appreciative of the advocacy that has been expressed in terms of focusing on the needs of the veterans of this Nation and their families in terms of ensuring that there will be adequate burial space available to them when the need arises in the future.

As the 20th Century comes to a close, the National Cemetery Administration is in a much better position to meet the burial requests of many of America's veterans and their eligible dependents than it was at the start of the decade.

Over the next year, four new national cemeteries will open. This achievement will add a total of six new cemeteries to VA's inventory over the past decades. These new projects, along with the commitments provided by individual States through the State Cemetery Grants Program, provide greater accessibility for eligible beneficiaries to be buried in a veterans' cemetery.

Mr. Chairman, the American Legion commends these efforts. Nevertheless, it seems the work of the National Cemetery Administration and the Congress is far from complete. Additional strategic planning and preparation must be made by VA for the large number of veterans' deaths projected over the next 20 years. This is an issue that must be dealt with in a timely and very vigorous manner.

It is the view of the American Legion that Public Law 105–368 provides the States with a greater incentive to construct new veterans' cemeteries. The grant program is an important and appropriate complement to the National Cemetery Administration. The American Legion believes the program, however, can be further strengthened by increasing the current plot allowance paid by VA to the States and by providing the benefit to all veterans buried in those cemeteries and, thus, eliminating the wartime eligibility requirement.

Many States are reluctant to commit to the long-term maintenance costs associated with veterans' cemeteries. Although Public Law 105–368 permits VA to fund all construction costs and initial equipment costs at the 100 percent rate for new veterans' cemeteries, the long-term cost of maintaining these cemeteries was not addressed by this legislation. The American Legion believes the States could become a more effective accompaniment to the National Cemetery Administration, if the suggested provisions were enacted.

Mr. Chairman, the VA and the Congress must aggressively pursue the construction of new national cemeteries and State veterans' cemeteries. The areas in greatest need of national cemetery expansion are in the Oklahoma City area; Atlanta; South Florida, Miami, in particular; northern California; western Pennsylvania; St. Louis; and Detroit. These, we believe, should receive the most attention.

The American Legion also believes the National Cemetery Administration must remain the lead agency in planning for the burial needs of the Nation's veterans. It is the responsibility of the Federal Government to provide burial benefits to veterans and not the States. The VA must ensure that new veterans' cemeteries are designed and constructed in areas of greatest need and not rely, necessarily, on the States to fulfill this requirement.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the necessity of adequate operational funding, there is a need to sufficiently fund long-term maintenance requirements at the older national cemeteries. We recognize there is never enough resources to fully meet all maintenance requirements.

Periodically certain cemeteries have visible maintenance problems, such as were illustrated this morning, that must be dealt with immediately. In general, these issues are addressed when brought to the attention of cemetery managers. The National Cemetery Administration must continually update its priority minor construction project requirements and submit this list for inclusion in annual appropriation requests.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, the American Legion believes it appropriate that criteria for burial in Arlington National Cemetery be codified by statute. The American Legion believes there should be no waivers for unqualified individuals, except under unique and compelling circumstances which comport with codified, nonpartisan waiver procedures as established by Congress.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, the American Legion appreciates the efforts of the Department of Defense to provide burial honors to all honorably discharged veterans, and we believe this will go a long way towards meeting the Nation's obligation to these veterans as a final gesture of their military service.

That concludes our statement, Mr. Chairman, and we will be glad to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wilkerson appears on p. 88.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much. Mr. Rhea.

STATEMENT OF LARRY D. RHEA

Mr. RHEA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to you, good morning, Ms. Brown, and the other distinguished members of the subcommittee.

NCOA is sincerely grateful to express our thoughts at this oversight hearing on the National Cemetery Administration and on Arlington National Cemetery. We trust our prepared testimony and our comments today will be helpful to you in fulfillment of your oversight responsibilities.

It is appropriate at the outset of my remarks to extend the Association's appreciation for your examination into the procedures regarding burial at Arlington National Cemetery. NCOA clearly recognizes that without the work of this subcommittee, the passage of Stump–Evans, H.R. 70, would probably have been much more difficult. The Association thanks you for that, and, hopefully, 1999 will be the year that we prevail in the Senate and we see this legislation become law.

Beyond seeing the codification of the eligibility requirements for burial in Arlington, the Association identified three areas that we believe are suitable for your continued oversight.

NCOA is deeply concerned about the space dilemma confronting Arlington. Mr. Chairman, we urge this subcommittee to remain resolute and determined on the conveyance of the Navy annex property to the cemetery. It is most unfortunate, in our view, that a provision in the fiscal year 1999 Defense Authorization Bill to authorize the conveyance of that land was stripped by members in the conference committee last year.

If we miss the opportunity to lay claim to the land now occupied by the Navy annex, NCOA believes we may very well have missed the only opportunity to extend the life of this national shrine. Your continued attention to and support of this issue remains essential.

Burial space is also one of the challenges at hand for the National Cemetery Administration, and that leads to our second issue: VA's lack of a plan that articulates a long-term vision for national cemeteries is a concern to this association. We have stated many times, and continue to believe, that the National Cemetery Administration must develop a properly funded long-term plan that will accommodate future burial requirements. We believe that plan must include new cemeteries in the national system complemented by the State Veterans' Cemetery Grants Program.

It appears to NCOA that VA's vision for burial space for veterans at the present time is focused only on the State Veterans' Cemetery Grants Program. While NCOA appreciates the recent change in the grant funding for starting and equipping new State cemeteries, this association does not look upon the State program as a replacement for the national system.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, is the issue of equipment in need of replacement and maintenance. As this association has been advocating for many years, this is an area of VA's budget that needs and

deserves attention, and we too suggest this is an area of appropriate oversight and investigation by this subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, the noncommissioned officers and petty officers of NCOA salute all of you for the important work you do and your thoughtful consideration of our testimony today is likewise sincerely appreciated. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rhea appears on p. 91.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you.

And, Colonel Norton, it looks like you have cleanup.

STATEMENT OF COLONEL ROBERT F. NORTON, USA, RET.

Colonel NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Ranking Member, Ms. Brown, and the other distinguished members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to represent the nearly 400,000 members of the Retired Officers Association on the issue of national cemeteries, State veterans' cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery.

As I said, we represent about 400,000 officers from all seven of the uniformed services, including active duty, retired officers, National Guard and reserve, and surviving spouses of decreased members. I would ask, Mr. Chairman, if you would permit the full text of my statement to be entered into the record, I would appreciate it.

Mr. EVERETT. Without objection.

Colonel NORTON. TROA members are, on the average, age 66. The average age of all military retirees is 61. Numbered in this group of American patriots are many of the great generation of World War II and Korean War heroes, and they are passing from the scene in growing numbers each day, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman. My message on behalf of these military retired veterans is simple and straightforward: The VA's budget request for the national cemeteries and its planning process does not ensure that when these great Americans pass from the scene there will be adequate space to bury them with honor in a national cemetery or State cemetery.

Successive years of restrained budgets have made it impossible to address long-term operational and field management needs of the National Cemetery Administration. Veteran deaths are projected to increase from 572,000 in the year 2000 to over 620,000 in 2008. Clearly, additional funds are needed to begin the planning process for expanding existing national cemeteries and developing new ones, including areas of the country with fast growing veteran populations like the south and southwest. Overall, locations that merit early consideration include Miami, Atlanta, Sacramento, St. Louis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Albuquerque-Santa Fe.

The Retired Officers Association, Mr. Chairman, recommends that you direct the VA to develop a strategic plan by the end of this year, addressing how the Department plans to expand the capacity of the national cemeteries over the next 10 years to accommodate the projected number of interments of veterans. To get this process started, we also recommend that Congress approve the modest increase of about $9 million over the administration's request, as recommended in the Veterans' Independent Budget for Fiscal Year 2000.

In the same vein, Mr. Chairman, TROA believes that Congress must act, in the very near future, to transfer the contiguous Federal land that borders Arlington National Cemetery in order to expand the cemetery's capacity well into the 21st century.

And if I may, Mr. Chairman, although it is not directly the subject of this hearing, I would like to state publicly that TROA is greatly appreciative of Mr. Buyer's leadership and efforts in the House Armed Services Committee as chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee for his work on the issue of burial honors.

Military honors is an issue of great concern to the members of the Retired Officers Association and of military retirees and veterans in general, and we appreciate your leadership on that matter, sir, and also on the issue of developing incentives for greater involvement of the National Guard and the reserve in performing military honors, and in supporting the active force in accomplishing that essential mission of dignity for America's veterans.

That concludes my remarks, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to represent TROA, and I look forward to any questions that you might have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Norton appears on p. 95.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much, Colonel.

Let me ask each member of the panel to respond. Because of a lack of a VA plan for new national cemetery construction, do you believe there could be a veteran who would be denied burial in a national cemetery?

Colonel NORTON. I am sorry, I didn't hear the last part of your phrase, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. Because there are no new national cemeteries being constructed, do you believe that there could be a veteran denied burial in the future in a national cemetery?

Mr. RHEA. I will start, Mr. Chairman. Yes, sir, we certainly believe that that will occur. And in future years we will really see evidence of it here before too much longer.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Wilkerson, we will just go right down the line there.

Mr. WILKERSON. Yes, sir, we believe this will have a dramatic impact as the death rate of veterans' increases. There is currently not enough space as it is, in reasonable proximity to most of the main centers of veterans' populations. This will certainly worsen in the future as further demands are placed on the system.

Mr. WEIDMAN. It is really hard to get where you need to get if you don't have a plan and a roadmap in order to get there, Mr. Chairman. What we used to call the seven-Ps are proper prior planning (and I will leave it at that) would appertain in this issue.

You can't start this on a dime. You have to project out and plan for it. And then, even once you have a plan, it is not easy to implement it, as you well know, with the appropriating committees, et cetera, within the Congress. But the need for a plan is readily self-evident.

Ms. ILEM. Yes, I would certainly have to agree with that, that the time line that is involved in having a cemetery from plan to fully operational takes a significant amount of time, and to acquire appropriate funding for it as well. So certainly that would be a concern. If plans are not made now or within the very near future, the

opportunity will pass and there will not be the appropriate space available.

Colonel NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I would just make a personal observation. My father was an artillery battery commander in World War II. He is 82 years of age. I would hate to think there would be insufficient capacity in the national cemetery system when his time comes to pass from the scene.

It is a very emotional issue for us, and it is an emotional issue for our families across the country. The planning process needs to begin now. It cannot be started 2 or 3 years from now. Thank you.

Mr. EVERETT. Let me also ask each of you to respond to what your vision of a plan for the next 10 or 15 years should be. Many of you mentioned the fact of the lack of a plan. What should that plan look like?

Colonel, we will start with you and then we will go in the other direction.

Colonel NORTON. I think the general outlines of the plan, sir, are simply to look at the demand required against the existing capacity. As you know, the veterans' population is gradually moving to the south and southwest. There is an absolute need to begin the planning process to expand existing national cemetery space in that area, complemented by the State cemetery system.

I would not presume to offer specifics on how a plan might be developed, but clearly demand is exceeding capacity and, therefore, the planning must begin at this time.

Ms. ILEM. My ideas also would be along those lines, that there is going to have to be some sort of looking at the logistics of throughout the country where the need is going to be the greatest, what their plan in place is for now or how much available space they have at those particular places in that part of the country and then look in the future.

They have an estimate of what the peak period will be; try to plan for that now so that that is not missed; that they can hit their target and make those spaces available throughout the country as needed.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Weidman, it seems we are all agreeing we need to follow a roadmap.

Mr. WEIDMAN. Yes, sir. I would just mention that, in addition to looking at the demographics, we know that most folks want to be, or most folks want to be buried within 75 miles of their last place of residence.

Particularly looking at the demographic shifts, as an example, to Congresswoman Brown's home State of Florida. which is the most significant magnet State for veterans of every generation and, therefore, the demand will be, perhaps, accelerated the quickest in the State of Florida. However, this trend is true right across the Sunbelt, including in Alabama and many other southern States.

The real concerns are really two-fold here. The first half has to do with maintenance and with staffing patterns, et cetera. The second half, and is even more important for forward planning, and that is lands acquisition. You simply are not going to be able to waltz into Minnesota, into Florida, into Alabama, or any other State and acquire private land for a cemetery, whether veterans' cemetery or not.

It is in almost all cases going to have to be already land that is currently owned by the Federal Government, either VA property, DOD or some other Federal entity, and land where it is going to be excess and pick it up on a BRAC process. For instance, under DOD there may be a clause you will want to add into the DOD authorization bill, and it is that kind of planning, Mr. Chairman, that cannot start on a dime. You have to plan now for the year 2020. Because once that Federal lands are privatized, we will never get it back for cemeteries.

Mr. WILKERSON. Mr. Chairman, we are not telling the VA how to do their business, but it seems like there is ample data identifying where the greatest need is at the present time, and an understanding what the future will definitely bring in terms of increased demand. We believe that VA should begin this planning process yesterday rather than tomorrow if they are going to be able to meet the timetable that is clearly indicated by the current mortality rate of today's veterans.

Mr. RHEA. Just briefly, I would certainly like to associate the Non Commissioned Officers Association with all of the relevant points that were made so clearly here, and just add one other one, Mr. Chairman.

This vision or this strategic plan, in our view, first of all, has to get delinked from the budget process. It seems to us that our forward thinking on national cemeteries is only 4 or 5 years, and that that plan is directly related to the budget process that we go through. And even though that is a 5-year plan, we all know that budgets are really good for only about 1 year, because we come in the next year and we change them.

So what I am suggesting is that this long-range vision, as has been pointed out here, has got to be delinked. That thinking has to be delinked from that budget process, and we have to start projecting out 15 or 20 years. It takes 7 to 8 years conservatively from the time of conception to activation of a cemetery, maybe as much as 10 or 12 years. The budget process will never cut it.

Mr. EVERETT. I would like to ask this panel to remain in place, please. Other Members have questions for you, and I have to make a 7-minute dash. So excuse me.

[Recess.]

Mr. EVERETT. The hearing will resume. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. All of you have noted the value of State cemetery grants as a way of complementing the national cemetery system. Several of you observed that some States are hesitant to apply for the grants, my State being one of them. I am understanding that in a few places local veterans' organizations oppose the State cemetery program.

I am interested in each of you giving the subcommittee your insight on the State cemetery program, what needs to be done to make it more effective to complement the national program, because it doesn't take from the national. Many governors and State legislatures are reluctant to commit State funds because the locals do not support the program. What is your opinion about it, and how can we make the program better?

I would like to hear from each of you.

Mr. RHEA. I think, Mrs. Brown, your comments in framing the question were very good, in that the program should be a complement to the national system. We have heard anecdotal evidence of some States being reluctant to embrace it simply because of the long-term costs, the perpetual costs that are associated with that.

I believe what we are doing now, as far as the upfront costs, land acquisition, and the equipment load and so forth to start these is very, very good. My suggestion to improve this and make this more enticing for the governors and to States as well as to the citizens in local areas, if there is some mechanism —and I don't have an immediate suggestion for you this morning, but if there is some mechanism or formula that we could develop to help address what I think is, or what NCOA thinks is, really the long-term concern here, if we could help them address that, we might see more take up the program.

Ms. BROWN. Are you saying, for example, I think the entry fee is about $150, if we could raise that to maybe $300 per plot allowance?

Mr. WILKERSON. The American Legion has long been interested and concerned by the burial problems facing veterans in this country. We supported the VA's efforts and the legislation that was passed, establishing the State Veterans' Cemetery Grants Program. The American Legion endorsed that approach to assisting the VA in providing for veteran's burial needs.

This program originally provided limited funding to the States, and I think this made many really reluctant to take advantage of it. Unfortunately, there is still that same attitude towards the current program, even though the funding level has been greatly increased by the recent legislation. Once it is more clearly understood, hopefully more States can be persuaded that it will now be advantageous, although there will still be some long-term costs.

To assist them, though, as we commented on in our statement, we believe that an increase in the plot allowance would help the States. We also believe the eligibility criteria should be liberalized so that any veteran, not just a wartime veteran, would be eligible or to have that paid to the State facility.

This would go a long ways towards helping them meet their long-term maintenance costs.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Chairman, may I have a couple more minutes so they can finish answering the question?

Mr. EVERETT. Certainly.

Mr. WEIDMAN. There are two things, Ms. Brown, I would like to point out.

First is you have to plan for it. If you have seen one State, incidentally, on this attitude toward State cemeteries, you have seen one State. Some States are resistant to it, others, such as Wisconsin—and my good friend Ray Boland handed me this during the slight break, and pointed out that many State governments will donate State land for State cemeteries without batting an eyelash and even some county governments.

It really has to do with helping people getting a "buy-in" into the process. We talked a great deal in the first part of this hearing about the planning process and reaching out and bringing the States in on this, from the Governor's office or the Department of,

or Division of Veterans Affairs on down, and giving people a stake in having and honoring our, ("our" meaning the American people's,) honored dead who have passed away, who served their country well when they were young and vigorous. So I think the planning process can produce a consensus on a State-by-State basis.

The second thing has to do with the fiscal restraints that you are talking about. I know that you will get many more details once again from Mr. Boland and some of the State directors when that panel comes up here, but there is pending now the legislation in the Congress that would extend the authority for States to float tax-free bonds for those States that are already doing it. And it is the States that have the best developed veterans' service matrix. Utilize that (tax-free bond authority) as a mechanism in order to fund it.

If that were extended to all States, for purposes of providing veterans' services, including State cemeteries, maintenance, et cetera, as well as service to those still living. We are talking about a tiny amount of money in terms of lost revenue. It is not tax expenditures or dollar expenditures, it is tax revenues that you would be foregoing. Then I think you would be able to encourage many other States to float those bonds and to move forward with the State cemeteries and you would have a bargaining chip when you went to the National Governors' Association.

Last, but not least, I would certainly encourage you to join with the Chairman and go talk to the staff and ask to speak to the National Governors' Association on this vital issue now that we have a plan for the future. And I suspect you would get a great reception from governors on both sides of the aisle.

Ms. ILEM. Ms. Brown, I would just note you mentioned in your opening statement that you wanted to know how the program was working overall.

Certainly that is a concern of the DAV as well. And in my statement I mentioned that since the current program, the funding levels have been increased to 100 percent. Is there adequate funding for those States that have applied and either been approved or on the table before them? Have they been able to meet the funding level with this properly? I would assume an increased interest based on the jump from 50 percent funding to 100 percent, and I would be interested to know the answer to that question.

I think that certainly the supplement of this program is important to continue as it lessens the impact of the unavailability of national cemeteries. With that situation pending, that it is important to continue, but to have adequate funding for that program.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, and we will ask that question about the program when the VA comes up.

Ms. ILEM. Thank you.

Colonel NORTON. Ms. Brown, I would say that your question is really on target, but I would respectfully suggest that this is a little bit cart before the horse.

As some of the other witnesses have indicated, the State Cemetery Grants Program is meant to be a complement or a supplement. For that very reason, we believe that the first thing that needs to be done is for the VA to develop its plan, its strategic plan, for the national cemeteries.

As you know, a number of Members of Congress are sponsoring bills for particular national cemeteries in their States, in their districts and so forth. But what is really needed is a comprehensive national plan on the national cemeteries.

To some extent there is the perception—at least with the State Veterans' cemetery grants—that perhaps the VA is using them as kind of a gaming thing. Now that the grants are up to 100 percent, perhaps the VA is kind of laying back saying, well, let's wait and see which States are going to grab the brass ring and put up a State veteran's cemetery. We think that is the cart before the horse.

We need to see the national plan, where the national cemeteries are going to be created and expanded, and then, on the basis of that national commitment, then the VA can negotiate, work with the States, work with the veterans' groups and find out how State veterans' grants can be used to supplement the plan that we have not yet seen.

Ms. BROWN. Colonel, just one follow-up there. I agree with you that we need a comprehensive national plan, and I am waiting to talk to the VA about that, but given the magnitude of the problem and the seriousness of the problem and that it is right upon us, I just see that we need to move on several fronts, and the State being one of them.

Coming from Florida, even if we got the cemetery in Miami, it is not going to help in North Florida. So we need to move forward on many fronts, is what I am thinking.

Colonel NORTON. I agree with you. I think we can move out on both simultaneously, but one of the concerns I think that we have all expressed at the table here is that we don't see anything on the table in terms of where the national cemeteries are. So it is very hard to see how we could exploit the opportunity of the State grants program until we see where the national cemetery system is going.

My own State, Maryland, has a very active and aggressive State grants program, but it varies from State to State. You really can't build a national plan on the basis of whether a State may or may not step up to the 100 percent grants that are now available.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you. I want to thank the panel. I apologize for the fact that we did have some official business we had to attend to that interrupted your testimony. I do appreciate your appearing here today.

I will now ask for panel three to step forward. That would be Ray Boland, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs; Charles Smith, Assistant Secretary of the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by Eli Panee, Program Manager; and Lieutenant Colonel Robin Higgins, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs.

STATEMENTS OF RAYMOND G. BOLAND, SECRETARY, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS; CHARLES F. SMITH, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS, NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, ACCOMPANIED BY: ELI PANEE, PROGRAM MANAGER, NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS; AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBIN L. HIGGINS, USMC (RET.), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF RAYMOND G. BOLAND

Mr. BOLAND. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am Ray Boland, Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and I, too, appreciate this opportunity to make comments here today and to represent Wisconsin's 500,000 veterans.

Mr. EVERETT. Well, Mr. Boland, appreciate your being here, and let me say before we get started that I would like each of you to limit your testimony to 5 minutes, and the complete statements will be made a part of the official records.

Thank you. Please proceed.

Mr. BOLAND. I would like to mention first that in recent years we have been through the whole process of the closure of a national cemetery, the construction of a State cemetery under the 50 percent funding, and we currently have a project under development for the 100 percent funding. So we have had experience with all of that.

I, too, strongly believe the national cemetery system must continue to add new facilities near large population centers and seek the budgetary support they need to carry out their mission. But I also believe that the State cemetery Grant Program is an appropriate complement to the national system, by providing coverage in geographic areas that the national cemeteries do not reach and likely will never reach.

We recognized this in Wisconsin 6 years ago when we were faced with the closure of our national cemetery in Milwaukee. I consulted with the USDVA staff, we looked at the whole situation, and a new national cemetery had been approved for the Chicago area. We couldn't expand in Milwaukee because of urban restrictions. The total situation lent itself to doing a State cemetery project. So we faced the same dilemma that exists across the country. Do we sit back and watch the national cemetery close, hoping something else is going to happen, or do we take the initiative to make sure our veterans have a proper burial facility? We chose the latter.

We started out with the goal of having our new facility ready by the time the national cemetery closed. We had 3 years to do that. I am happy to tell you we had the first interment at the new State cemetery on exactly the same day that they had the last interment at the national cemetery, September 30, 1996. That took a lot of close work, coordination, cooperation and partnership, which I think is the operative word in this whole issue.

Our Governor, Tommy Thompson, and the State legislature gave us the funding support we requested to meet the State's portion of the project. The end result was that the quality of this project, which is portrayed in the rendering you have in that brochure, is as good or better than any national cemetery in America, and it is

a facility that Wisconsin's veterans and citizens are very, very proud of.

We began construction of another facility this fall under the 100 percent funding authorization. It is sited in Northern Wisconsin in a rural area, that will be smaller in size and scope than the project you see before you. We also have a cemetery in Central Wisconsin, which has been there since the Civil War, along with the national cemetery system. So this is nothing new for States. When we talk about will States do this, there are a lot of State veterans' cemeteries that have been around as long as the nationals have.

So what we have now is a strategic plan that provides coverage for the State of Wisconsin that has burial facilities within 75 miles of more than 90 percent of our veterans' population. I think this experience demonstrates how State and Federal Government can work together to provide the hallowed ground our veterans have earned.

The funding issues are a major concern, there is no question about it, and construction is only part of the picture. But there is no doubt in my mind that 100 percent construction funding is better than 50 percent, and I think that that is a very important start. But the question of operational costs as we move along is a joint concern.

The difference with the 100 percent is going to mean about 10 years of operating costs for us versus the 50–50 formula. So that helps a lot. But there are other steps that should be taken. Standardization of burial plot allowance and perhaps increasing its monetary amount would be a very helpful step for us.

Now, I think this 100 percent funding thing is going to cause more States to develop projects. In fact, I actually fear that that response could be so great that we could wind up in the same situation soon that we are currently in with the State Home Partnership Construction Grant Program.

During the last 10 years, the States have become a major player in providing long-term care for our veterans with the State home facilities. And at the very time when the population is aging at an all-time high, we have tried to ramp up to meet that demand, and the situation that we are now in is we have a $200 million backlog of unfunded grant applications for State homes. So what are we doing? We States are competing with each other on an annual basis for who is going to get funding to provide long-term care for our veterans.

Is the same thing going to happen with the cemetery grant program? Are we going to be competing for annual ranking for which cemetery gets approved? There is that danger, and I wanted to mention that to you.

The 100 percent is a great step in the right direction, but I think if we really work together as partners, we can accomplish this mission. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Boland, with attachment, appears on p. 100.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much. Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES F. SMITH

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss issues concerning the national cemetery system and the State Grants Program for State veterans' cemeteries.

The North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs was established by unanimous vote of the 1945 General Assembly to provide assistance to approximately 400,000 returning World War II veterans. We are still serving those World War II veterans, even though there is only 160,000 left in the State, and that 160,000, as was mentioned before, the average age is 76. So we have a big job ahead in the near future.

The State operates three cemeteries, State veterans' cemeteries, which were approved by the General Assembly of North Carolina in 1991. The cemeteries are located in Jacksonville, near Camp LeJeune; at Spring Lake, near Fort Bragg; and at Black Mountain, in the western part of the State. The annual appropriated budget for these three cemeteries is over half a million dollars. The plot or interment allowance that we receive from the benefits department of the VA is $54,750 last year, only 1/10 of the expense of operating those cemeteries.

As my colleagues have mentioned, the number of veterans who do not receive plot or interment allowance is about 20 percent of those veterans that we bury. And the plot interment allowance is only $150. It has been that way since the early 1970s when it was enacted.

I have been in the business, in this Veterans Affairs for the State of North Carolina for 27 years. At the time when I first started, there were four national cemeteries in North Carolina, small as they were. Three of those closed, and now we have one national cemetery. And that is the reason North Carolina got into the State cemetery business, is to provide a resting place for those honored veterans and their family members.

We not only bury wartime veterans, we bury peacetime veterans. We bury all veterans who are eligible, but we only receive plot or interment allowances for those veterans who are wartime veterans, and we don't even receive plot or interment allowances from the Veterans Benefits Department for veterans who die with service-connected disability.

There has been legislation proposed for several years by Senator Biden to correct that problem, to provide for additional funds for plot or interment allowance and to include veterans who are buried in State cemeteries for the service-connected veterans.

The cost of constructing the cemeteries, the three cemeteries, was about $1.2 million of State funds, about $750,000 of Federal funds. But at half a million dollars a year since 1993, this State has far expended more than those construction costs, and it is going to continue to increase.

The 100 percent financing and the 100 percent of the providing the equipment for the State cemeteries is a good initiative, but it is about halfway of what needs to be done. The operational expenses, whether it be in the form of increasing the plot or interment allowance, which is not coming through the national cemeteries program or the cemetery section of the VA, it comes from the

veterans benefit part, would be a very little amount if you went to $300. It would be a drop in the bucket as to what those veterans are actually worth.

The other thing of increasing the benefit to those veterans is that the 75 miles from a veteran's home is just a figment. Most veterans, I'd say 90 percent of the veterans, want to be buried within 10 miles of their home. We probably provide approximately 10 percent of the burial for veterans and 90 percent stay in their home community.

One of the other things that might be considered, local county-city cemeteries that are run by municipalities usually have a place in that cemetery for veterans, a veterans' section. If the plot or interment allowance was increased to include all veterans and also increased in monetary it would encourage more of those cemeteries. Veterans want to be buried in their community, not 75 miles from home, not 50 miles from home. Something needs to be done to aid not only the State cemeteries and national cemeteries but to provide a benefit to that veteran to have a burial in his community, and that can be done by raising that and including all veterans.

To conclude, sir, I do appreciate the opportunity to be here. I think the 100 percent financing is a good step. I think that there are a number of things that can be done. The Federal Government cannot continue to put full responsibility of programs, such as nursing-home beds, cemetery plots and other things on the States. No veteran from North Carolina was ever drafted by North Carolina. They came from the U.S. Government and the U.S. Government has an obligation to provide. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith appears on p. 108.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you.

Colonel Higgins, you are batting cleanup, so go right ahead.

STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBIN L. HIGGINS

Lieutenant Colonel HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, Ms. Brown, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today as you address these important issues.

I represent a State with over 1.7 million veterans, the second largest veterans' population in the country. Florida also has the oldest veterans' population, and one of the largest remaining populations of World War II veterans. Interment in a final resting place that reflects the honor with which they served this country is a matter of considerable priority to them, to me, and to my governor. A vision of a model national cemetery is, of course, Arlington, peaceful, hallowed ground in the midst of urban congestion. A suitable place of honor for our patriots and heroes.

The Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell is magnificent. In fact, it won the award last year as the best of 115 national cemeteries. Certainly Florida doesn't face some of the maintenance issues and maintenance challenges that the northern States face with respect to weather; however, the Florida National Cemetery has set an example of sound management and partnering with State and local government to enhance appearance while reducing costs. In my estimation, the most important maintenance issue facing us in Florida relates to the VA's plan for our increased future needs.

The Florida National Cemetery has seen incredible increases in burial activity since it was opened in 1988. That year it took in 288 casketed burials and 169 cremation burials. In contrast, last year they had 2,855 casketed burials and 2,278 cremation burials, an increase of over 1,000 percent in just 10 years. It is currently the third most active national cemetery in the entire system and increases of 9 percent annually are projected between now and 2008.

The VA's long-term plan for maintenance must address our future needs. As a responsible American, I am aware of the need to spend our tax dollars wisely. However, I can assure you that our veterans' cemeteries are not the place to settle for a minimal level of care. The value to Americans everywhere, and to the families of our fallen soldiers, in particular, makes the investment in our national cemeteries worthwhile. Honoring veterans whose service has guaranteed our way of life sets a critically needed example for our children as well.

Mr. Chairman, I urge this committee to endorse adequate funding to upkeep our national cemeteries now and in the out years, and to insist that those funds are managed properly and efficiently, thereby ensuring that our national cemeteries remain a source of dignity and pride for all Americans.

As I mentioned earlier, Florida has the oldest veterans' population of any State, yet we have only one other small national cemetery besides the Florida National Cemetery accepting casketed remains. However, none of our cemeteries is closer than 250 miles to the largest segment of our oldest, densest, and fastest growing population of veterans, and that is South Florida. In studies conducted by the VA in 1987 and again in 1994, South Florida was listed both times as a priority for a national cemetery in terms of need, but one has yet to be built.

The current veterans' population of the six counties in South Florida, which would be served by a new national cemetery, total over 470,000. As pointed out by Congresswoman Brown, nearly 25,000 veteran deaths are anticipated in Southeast Florida alone in fiscal year 2000, with this number increasing every year until the year 2010. We must bury these veterans with the honor that they deserve, close enough to their homes and families so that they will not be forgotten.

I am told that, sadly, a number of deceased veterans' remains make the 5-hour trip from South Florida to the Florida National Cemetery each month all too often unaccompanied totally by any family members because of the long distance, and those family members will never see them again. South Florida is long overdue for a national cemetery and it is fundamentally wrong for us to delay its construction until a time when it just doesn't matter any more.

On behalf of the 1.7 million veterans in South Florida, many of whom have grown up and lived in other States all over the Nation before coming to Florida to live out their remaining years, I humbly ask for your help. We have been asked to participate in the State Cemetery Grants Program. The current program builds a cemetery on State-donated land but provides no assistance for operations and maintenance.

We are willing to consider complementing the national cemetery program with a State cemetery, but only after we have a commitment for a national cemetery in South Florida and ongoing assistance in the operations and maintenance. We invite comparisons of the State Veterans' Nursing Home Program, which we have bought into and embraced wholeheartedly in the State of Florida.

Winston Churchill said that a Nation that does not honor its heroes will soon have no heroes to honor. Mr. Chairman, it is absolutely essential to the character and the core values of this country that we continue to honor our heroes.

I request your indulgence for a moment to personal reflection. My husband, Colonel Higgins, who died at the hands of terrorists while serving his country is buried in Quantico National Cemetery just down the road. Words cannot express how important it is to me that he is at rest on American soil in a place of dignity and peace. The value of seeing his grave site and others around him kept to a high standard cannot be measured in mere dollars.

I urge this panel to do whatever it can to ensure that every American, past, present, and future is secure in the promise that they will be laid to rest in the arms of a grateful Nation.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for listening to my testimony this morning.

[The prepared statement of Colonel Higgins appears on p. 113.]

Mr. EVERETT. And thank you, Colonel.

I must say I am very much impressed with the testimony that all three of you have given us today, and there is much that we are in agreement on. There is everything that we are in agreement on.

I am going to have some questions for the record, and the majority of them will go toward operational costs, because that is a going to be a big deal. As the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Boland, mentioned, while the 100 percent gave them an additional 10 years before they started assuming operational costs, I would like from each of you a detailed explanation of what your operational costs would be and also how you see the Federal Government playing a part of that.

So that will be for the record and it will be forthcoming. I will get my notes to you so that you can get that information to me.

(See pp. 132 and 133.)

Mr. EVERETT. And now I am going to yield to Ms. Brown. I know she has some questions that she wants to ask.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Boland and Mr. Smith, I want to thank you very much for coming here and sharing your insight and information on how your States have addressed this problem. I feel like we are headed for a crisis in Florida if we don't get with it.

I really like the concept of the partnerships. Also, you mentioned the volunteer program. Can you tell us a little bit more about how that volunteer program works?

And I will get to my person in a second, Colonel.

How does your volunteer program work; how can the State, the Federal Government benefit from having a more active volunteer participation in the programs?

Mr. BOLAND. Are you referring to States voluntarily participating in developing projects or—I don't recall mentioning a volunteer. I think it was Charlie.

Mr. SMITH. Congresswoman Brown, I think it was in North Carolina where we have some help from our veterans' organizations.

Ms. BROWN. Yes, yes.

Mr. SMITH. Especially around Camp LeJeune, which we had the muscle point—Marine Corps Association, the Fleet Reserves, the Marine Corps—some folks from the base; also the families have provided some volunteer help. And what we receive is on special days mainly, that is the biggest part of it, but we do have some people who come back weekly and provide some maintenance for the cemeteries. Maybe they do some edging. Also, one lady comes back, and she has flower beds and she does some landscaping. Her husband is buried there. We have donations for landscape stuff, such as bushes and so forth, rose bushes, trees that come to us from these volunteer groups.

One of the other things that we are doing now is a memorial wall, that those people from North Carolina who are not buried in that cemetery, who maybe are buried at sea or lost, but who are not buried, we would have their names on the memorial wall, and the Fleet Corps Marines are donating the money to do that.

One of the other things we do to reduce the maintenance cost, we employ prison labor at a couple of our cemeteries. In one circumstance, actually people who are committed or imprisoned come, and we have two people on a daily basis, our employees had to be trained to supervise these people. We also have a team of prison workers come in a couple times a year to do big projects on the cemeteries.

The other thing is we use community service workers, maybe kids who have gone and got a DWI or something and the judge makes them have community service. We use those hours at the cemetery as community service.

So we try our best to reduce our maintenance costs. We have to. We are only allocated so much money per year by appropriation, and there are things that we need that we don't have and can't get and we have to budget well for it.

Ms. BROWN. Yes, sir. Mr. Boland, did you want to add to that?

Mr. BOLAND. We also supplement our labor requirements with help from the Department of Corrections. As a matter of fact, the project that you see in the picture is on a campus of 500 acres that the State of Wisconsin owns and there is a women's minimum security facility at this same location and they have assisted us on a regular basis.

Ms. BROWN. Okay. Just one other question for Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith, you mentioned how we could use what local cemeteries have, a section for veterans. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, ma'am. I have done veterans' service work for about 17 years before I came as a director of the agency, and almost in every community there is a municipal cemetery. In those cemeteries they allocate a certain area for veterans. The veteran, if buried there, receives a free plot. This is done not only I think in North Carolina but throughout the Nation, that veterans are buried in their own community.

My plan or my proposal is to increase the plot or interment allowance. Because, generally, the opening and closing of the grave in the interment is the cost of it. In other words, that could range anywhere from $300 to $800 just for opening and closing a grave. At least a $300 plot or interment allowance from the VA would aid those cemeteries or might encourage more of those cemeteries, municipal or county facilities, to open up a veterans' section.

And I am not saying this would take the place of the national cemeteries or State cemeteries. I think it is a way that we can help veterans, because the national and State cemeteries are burying less than 10 percent of the veterans. Most veterans are going to be buried in their community, either their church or wherever, and it might help to have all veterans, peacetime, wartime, whether they are receiving benefits or not, that they receive a plot or interment allowance when they pass away.

So that is, I think, a way of helping veterans and to increase benefits for veterans.

Ms. BROWN. Mr. Chairman, may I have a couple of minutes more for Colonel Higgins?

Mr. EVERETT. Certainly.

Ms. BROWN. Welcome from Florida. You have expressed concern that many States are concerned about the cost of long-term maintenance. What consideration have you given to the income stream from the plot allowances; and what, if any, incentives would an increase in this allowance have on our State's inclination to apply for a State grant?

Lieutenant Colonel HIGGINS. Well, to tell you the truth, I have been in the job for 4 months, and I am not sure how we got in the situation we are in. I agree with you, it is a hard situation and something that needs our attention immediately.

The suggestions that have been made by my colleagues and others this morning, and yourself also, about an increase in the burial allowance is a very intriguing and very positive suggestion, and it is something that I need to go back immediately and kind of check into and see how that would impact some of our thoughts and plans.

And it can't help but be positive, I know that, but I haven't had an opportunity to look into the overall plan.

As you and I have discussed, and will continue to discuss, because I care so much about this issue that the State Cemetery Grants Program, either the way it is now or the way that we might be able to fix it to be a little bit more palatable, is designed to be a complement; and we can only complement a system that is complete. And our system right now is so sorely lacking by not having this national cemetery in South Florida that that is really where I need to turn my attention to right now, and all of our attention.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you very much for coming and sharing that with us. I am looking forward to working with you. The problems that we have in South Florida are just so big and so profound.

Lieutenant Colonel HIGGINS. Pitiful.

Ms. BROWN. Have you thought about the 75-mile radius? People in North Florida actually have nowhere to go.

Lieutenant Colonel HIGGINS. Yes, I have thought about that. I hear people talking about the 75-mile radius, and we are looking

at a 250-mile distance to the nearest national cemetery for the—for South Florida folks. I agree that that 75-mile radius also leaves out so much more of our State. And we do need to look at that and we do need to consider that and once we have this national cemetery in South Florida, it still is not going to answer our questions and solve our problems.

So it is something we do need to look at, and certainly in the area of northwest Florida, north central Florida, southwest Florida, these areas need to be considered as well.

Ms. BROWN. Well, I look forward to working with you in the future.

Lieutenant Colonel HIGGINS. Same here.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. Most certainly. I also want to again thank this panel. As was the previous panel, Ms. Brown and I have both been talking about how impressed we have been with both panels' testimony. So thank you very much for appearing.

At this time we will call panel number four, Brian Burke, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works, accompanied by Mr. Jack Metzler, Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery, Department of the Army.

Also, without objection, we are going to have questions for the record for each panel, and I would like for those questions to appear in the appropriate place with those panels.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Burke, good to see you again this morning. Mr. Metzler, good to see you again this morning.

Mr. Burke, if you will please proceed with your testimony. I would ask you to keep it to 5 minutes and your complete statement will be put in the record.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN E. BURKE, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (CIVIL WORKS), DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, ACCOMPANIED BY: JOHN C. METZLER, SUPERINTENDENT, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Mr. BURKE. Thank you very much. It is a real pleasure for me to be here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Representative Brown. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Secretary of the Army in support of Arlington National Cemetery. My father and my uncle were pilots in the old Army Air Corps, and I am sure if they were with us they would be quite pleased and proud that I am able to provide testimony to this subcommittee and to speak in support of and represent Arlington National Cemetery.

Arlington National Cemetery is the Nation's principal shrine honoring men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. It is an honor for me to be representing the Nation's premier military cemetery, which is the home of such well-known edifices and historic sites as the Tomb of the Unknowns, the old and new memorial amphitheaters, the columbariums and the graves of Presidents Kennedy and Taft.

I appear before you today with Jack Metzler, who is the present Superintendent of Arlington, and one of the people who knows a

great deal about the cemetery, having grown up on it during a time when his father served as the superintendent as well.

Management of Arlington presents challenges unique among the Nation's national and military cemeteries. Not only is Arlington a heavily visited shrine honoring the past service of the men and women of our Armed Forces, it also continues to serve as an active burial place for today's military men and women. In 1998, there were 3,604 interments and 2,034 inurnments, and we expect these numbers to continue to grow. During the same year, about 2,700 ceremonies were conducted at Arlington.

Additionally, since the funeral of President Kennedy, Arlington has become the site of major memorial events and ceremonies as well as a major Washington-area tourist attraction. During fiscal year 1998, Arlington accommodated approximately 4 million visitors, making it one of the most visited historic sites in the national capital region. Thousands of visitors participate in events ranging from simple wreath laying ceremonies to major Veterans' Day and Memorial Day ceremonies conducted by the President.

As a national treasure and a Federal facility in the national capital area, planning for the long-range use, preservation, maintenance, and development of the cemetery is a critical undertaking. In this regard, we are engaging in several broad planning efforts to sustain our ability to carry out the cemetery's mission well into the future.

Last year, the master plan for the cemetery was updated. The President's budget for fiscal year 2000 proposes funding to begin both a 10-year capital investment plan and an automation plan. These steps are designed to ensure that Arlington will remain active as the Nation's premier military cemetery.

The master plan will be our overall guide as we address much-needed rehabilitation and construction at the cemetery. The master plan identifies areas that require rehabilitation, systems that need improvement in order to extend their useful lives, methods to maximize existing burial space, ways to improve efficiency and reduce long-term life cycle costs, and existing monuments, memorials and other structures that require maintenance and protection.

This plan identifies 14 parcels of land that are located in close proximity to the cemetery and that could be made available to meet the needs of the cemetery for future burials. Some of these parcels of land are owned by the Federal Government and are expected to be made available to the cemetery when they become excess to other government needs. The 5-year plan associated with the President's budget for fiscal year 1999 includes funds to prepare concept plans to develop these lands in anticipation of their being made available. Acquisition of this property would allow for continued operation of the cemetery well into the 21st century.

The cemetery's total budget for fiscal year 2000 is $12.5 million. That is an increase of $807,000 over the 1999 appropriation. This increase will be used to improve the cemetery's infrastructure and work toward implementation of the master plan. The fiscal year 2000 budget for operation and maintenance of the cemetery, $9.4 million, will provide for an average of 20 interments or inurnments daily for the support of a great many ceremonial events and for maintenance of the nearly 628 acres of land.

Major repairs, renovations and new facility construction make up the cemetery's construction program, which is budgeted at just under $2 million for fiscal year 2000. Ongoing construction activities include the preparation of concept utilization plans for developing contiguous lands, the repair of roads throughout the cemetery, the installation of a heating and air-conditioning system in the new facility-maintenance complex, and the grave liner program.

In formulating the annual program for the cemetery, we carefully balanced the immediate maintenance needs of the cemetery's buildings, roads, and grounds against the need to undertake more ambitious actions to meet the cemetery's long-term needs. At least twice each year, the superintendent and his staff review the maintenance plan for the cemetery to determine whether priorities should be adjusted in light of unanticipated needs for repairs.

It is important to note that new construction and major rehabilitation projects typically require more money than is available in a single fiscal year. Consequently, the decision to begin any capital project represents a multiyear commitment which may preclude or lead to postponement of other projects.

In addition to maintaining graves and niches containing the remains of more than 266,000 persons, we must maintain over 18 miles of roadways and walkways on the cemetery's 628 acres, as well as a number of historic sites located throughout the cemetery. Contractual services are a critical part of our O&M program.

Over recent years, the cemetery has gradually transferred from full-time in-house staff to contractors many duties that are well-defined and repetitive in nature. These changes have allowed the cemetery to retrain Federal employees to perform functions that cannot be contracted out. The budget includes funding to continue expansion of contracts for enhancing the appearance of the cemetery while reducing the overall cost and number of government employees.

For fiscal year 2000, the total of contractual services is estimated to be nearly $4.3 million. This includes contracts for grounds, maintenance, information guide services, tree and shrub maintenance, custodial services, and for other regular recurring maintenance items, such as headstone cleaning and realignment, maintenance of the eternal flame, and many other minor contracts.

The competition possible through contracting has resulted in the award of the current contract for custodial services to a much lower bidder than in the past, leading to significant savings in 1998 and 1999. The new contractor already has demonstrated his ability to perform the required custodial services even during the busiest season at Arlington. Our recent experience at Arlington is that use of contractual services has resulted in significant savings, and we will continue to closely monitor the extension of the contracts to assure continued success to seek improvements.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to working closely with you, Representative Brown, and the committee and committee staff to maintain Arlington National Cemetery as the Nation's principal shrine honoring men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks and we are prepared to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burke appears on p. 118.]

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much.

I appreciated visiting with the two of you yesterday. I enjoyed my tour very much, although I must say I was a little disappointed in some of the same things you are disappointed in, some of the maintenance.

I am going to have some questions for the record concerning how many miles of roads and things like that, that I don't want to take up the committee's time with when simple numbers will suffice. And, also, they concern additional monies available; what you do with those additional monies as far as operations and management programs, and so forth. But those questions will be made available to you and then we will insert them at this point in the record.

(See p. 135.)

Mr. EVERETT. What I would really like to get to is a lot of what I saw yesterday. Let me ask you, what are the nonrecurring one-time fix-ups needed currently at Arlington?

Mr. BURKE. Jack, why don't you take that.

Mr. METZLER. Mr. Chairman, we have just finished a master plan that outlines a 30-year fix, if you will, or a 30-year plan for Arlington cemetery. And in this 30-year plan, we talk about the infrastructure of the cemetery. Arlington, as you know, is a 135-year-old facility. The maintenance is ongoing.

I think we have been very responsible over the last 10 years to look at the needs of Arlington's burial requirements first, our inurnment requirements. As you know, we have two very active parts of the cemetery, the daily ground burials, as well as a large complex for cremated remains, called the columbarium.

Each year we have to make a very difficult decision, which area we attack first: Is it backlog maintenance? Is it the repair of our facility? Or is it the ongoing commitment to have interments and inurnments in Arlington cemetery?

We are in a cycle right now where we have had to spend more time and more effort in the columbarium complex, the last phase of Arlington, called Project 90, the ground burial, as well as repair of the memorial amphitheater, which is the centerpiece, if you will, of Arlington cemetery. It was a multiple-year project that cost over $6 million just to repair the outside facility.

To that end, other areas in the cemetery have not been able to be maintained in a perfect pristine condition, which we are not happy with either. And we are committed to continuing to work this master plan for the next 30 years to bring the entire cemetery up to a standard that would be acceptable and everyone would be proud of.

Mr. BURKE. If I could just add one additional point. The master plan is one component of the long-term planning strategy which would be tied to subsequent requests for funding that we have on the board. There is also a 10-year capitalization plan that we have received funding to get off the ground, which works compatibly with the master plan. And we are very optimistic that the two combined will help us to not only identify the issues but also properly acquire funding streams to address all the issues.

Mr. EVERETT. In the slide presentation we saw several examples of deferred maintenance needs. How much would it cost to repair the reception building at the Tomb of the Unknown?

Mr. METZLER. Before we could repair it, Mr. Chairman, we need to do an extensive study. This is a three-story building. We know we have had water damage in this building for a number of years. The building was completed in 1920. There has been no real major renovation done to the interior of the building since that time. So I would be misleading you if I were to throw a number out to begin with.

I think the first thing we need to do is a study. As a result of that study, then we would be able to come back and give you a more comprehensive answer.

Mr. EVERETT. And we are talking a comprehensive study. In other words, I was distressed to see some of the conditions at the Robert Kennedy site.

Mr. METZLER. Yes, sir, the same thing with the Kennedy grave site. This site is almost 30 years old. The control area that you showed in the slide was built for the Robert Kennedy as well as President Kennedy's grave site. All of the utilities terminate at this point and then go out with a secondary feed to the two grave sites. These structures, as well, need to be reviewed and then modernized.

We know we have problems out there. President Kennedy's grave site is the most visited site in the cemetery. Over 4 million visitors come there each year, and we certainly owe it to the visitors and the Nation to fix this area up.

Mr. EVERETT. I notice down in the hole, the control building, much of that stuff was corroded. Do you have any idea—is it likely to go next year or 2 years? Or is there a life-span that you are looking at where it absolutely has to be replaced?

Mr. METZLER. I know in the case of the Robert Kennedy grave site with the reflecting pond, there is an open leak there now and water is escaping through that system, and that is the repair that needs to be done now.

I am happy to report to you that we have done extensive maintenance on the eternal flame this last year, and that entire mechanism was rebuilt and reworked by the local gas company here. So I feel confident that we are in good shape there. But the room itself does have maintenance needs to it, and it does need to be modernized.

Mr. EVERETT. Do you have existing current funds that you can get to the Robert Kennedy——

Mr. METZLER. Not at this point. We do not have funds in the current budget or the budget for 2000.

Mr. EVERETT. It appears also, in visiting the chapel, that big cave-in, that you have buildings there literally being destroyed by leaks.

Mr. METZLER. That is correct as well. The hole in the chapel in the display room is a result of water working its way through the three stories of that building. We are aware of that, and we have had to make some difficult choices over the years as to which project was first.

Because this is not in a public visible area, we made a conscious decision not to repair this at this time, taking the bigger picture, that of the amphitheater, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier itself, and repairing that structure first. We know we have to come in and

repair the display area, the internal room, and that is our next major project for that building.

Mr. BURKE. I will just add that the benefit of the master plan is that all of the needs will be assessed and prioritized and then tied with the capitalization plan for which we will pursue appropriate funding.

Looking at a snapshot of the present condition, it appears as if there hasn't been an aggressive effort to maintain the facilities and the structures at the cemetery, but that is not the case. There is a good record of pretty sustained effort in preceding years. We are hoping to make it a little more comprehensive, though, with the master plan and the capitalization plan as well.

I would offer for the record to provide the past 10-years' history of maintenance that has been done at the cemetery.

[The information follows:]

OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS WE ADDRESSED

- PHASE II COLUMBARIUM CONSTRUCTION FOR $5.6 M 1989
- MAJOR ROAD REPAIR PROJECTS $2.4 M 1990
- REMOVAL OF PCB TRANSFORMERS 1990
- DEMOLITION OF THE TEMP VC FOR GRAVESITE DEVELOPMENT 1990
- NEW FACILITY MAINTENANCE COMPLEX $4.8 M 1991
- AMPHITHEATER REPAIRS FOR $4.8 M 1992
- AMPHITHEATER MARBLE RESTORATION FOR $4.5 M 1993
- UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK REMOVAL BEGAN IN 1993
- REPAIRS TO OLD AMIN BLDG FIRE DAMAGE 1993
- BEGAN NEW MASTER PLAN EFFORT IN 1993
- MAJOR REPAIRS IN SECTION 27 1994
- SERVICE COMPLEX RENOVATION $600 K 1994
- INITIATION OF GRAVELINER PROGRAM 1994
- McCLELLAN GATE REPAIRS 1995
- PROJECT 90 LAND DEVELOPMENT DESIGN 1995
- CUSTIS WALK RENOVATION DESIGN $250 K 1995
- KENNEDY GRAVESITE ELECTRICAL UPGRADE $300 K 1995
- VC PARKING FACILITY UPPER DECK REPAIR $350 K 1995
- EXPAND SCOPE OF CUSTODIAL CONTRACT 1996
- INITIATE NEW CONTRACT FOR TREE & SHRUB MAINTENANCE 1996
- PHASE III COLUMBARIUM CONSTRUCTION FOR $3.5 M 1997
- EXPAND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 1997
- REPLACE CUSTIS WALK FOR $1.2 M 1998
- EXPAND COLUMBARIUM ROAD SYSTEM $800 K 1998
- FURTHER EXPAND SCOPE OF MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS $200 K 1998
- INITIATE HEADSTONE CLEANING CONTRACT 1998
- CONSTRUCT WASH STAND FUEL ISLAND $800 K 1999
- CONCEPT LAND EXPANSION PLAN $500 1999
- FURTHER EXPAND MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS $250 K 1999
- RESTORE OLD MEMORIAL AMPHITHEATER 1999
- CORRECT LONG TERM CODE PROB. SERVICE COMPLEX $420 K 2000

Mr. EVERETT. This is an issue of money, is it not; and the lack of an overall study?

Mr. BURKE. Sort of a combination. You mean completing the master plan?

Mr. EVERETT. Yes.

Mr. BURKE. There is funding available to us to do the necessary studies to advance the plan.

Mr. EVERETT. I would particularly like for you to furnish for the record when you may get to the Robert Kennedy reflecting pool. I know that you all want to do that as quickly as possible, to see that it is fixed.

ROBERT KENNEDY GRAVESITE STUDY

[The information follows:]

The Arlington National Cemetery Superintendent and senior and technical staff have spent considerable time in preparing for the Kennedy Gravesite study. Priorities for the study and major repair areas have been identified through FY 1999. The study itself is among the highest priorities to be pursued in the Capital Investment Plan, which is funded in FY 2000. If funds become available during FY 2000, we expect to fund this plan in accordance with the priorities established under the Capital Investment Plan. One of the products of the Kennedy Gravesite and other capital plans will be to determine when and how much to request Congress to fund in annual appropriations for the various needed capital investments. The current estimated cost of the Kennedy Gravesite study is $300,000; the cost estimate for the follow-on design would be determined as part of the study. The projected scope of work, project cost, schedule and milestones for the repairs of the Kennedy gravesite will be determined in the study and design. In the short run, this work will compete with funding for developing additional gravesite space in Project 90, building additional Columbarium courts at the Columbarium complex, and other maintenance projects.

Mr. EVERETT. My final question. The walkways, obviously, some of that flagstone is in really bad shape. Have you had injuries out there already?

Mr. METZLER. We have had one injury a number of years ago on the Custis' walkway, and I'm happy to report to you, as we speak right now, that walkway is under repair, and it is a 2,000-foot-long walkway leading from the top of the Lee Mansion going to the bottom, if you will, of Section 36, going out the north end of the cemetery. We had received funding for that project, and it is about halfway completed.

The other walkways in the cemetery we have not had any accidents there that have been reported to us, that we have been held for a claim, but we are aware these walkways are starting to crumble and do need work. And to that end we are trying to incorporate more money into the budget each year to work on these flagstone walkways. They are a high maintenance item. They are very popular in this area in terms of aesthetics of the cemetery, but they also do require ongoing maintenance.

Mr. EVERETT. They are a lawyer's dream, too.

Mr. METZLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. EVERETT. Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on a couple of things. One, pertaining to the President Kennedy's grave site, did you say that it needs some repair and it is the most visited site?

Mr. METZLER. It is the most visited site at Arlington cemetery. And at the Kennedy grave site itself we have two items that need maintenance, one is a control room, which is underground, with utilities terminating at the main feed coming into the cemetery, and secondary feeds go out to both grave sites to support those sites as well as the granite and marble walkways and structures

that circle both graves. These big blocks of granite and marble have shifted over the years. They need to be either reset or maintenance performed on them.

So it is more than just fixing the control room, comprehensive studies of both sites need to be done and then a plan developed to fix both areas as well.

Ms. BROWN. Have you done the study?

Mr. METZLER. No, ma'am, we have not done the study yet. That will be the first process, to do the study and then to come back with a plan of how much maintenance will be required to fix these two areas.

Ms. BROWN. Do you have money for the study?

Mr. METZLER. We do not have money in our budget this year or next year to do the studies on either site.

Ms. BROWN. Well, if you can't do the study, I would like some additional information in writing on what needs to be done. I have a list of questions that I will furnish to you for your response.

(See p. 139.)

Ms. BROWN. In addition, can you give me some information on the bill that passed last year—and, hopefully, will pass out of committee again this year—that was sent over to the Senate but on which no action was taken concerning the naval facility that we wanted to use for an expansion of the Arlington cemetery?

Mr. METZLER. My understanding is that the Senate did not take the bill up last year. However, it was reintroduced again this year into the Defense Authorization Bill, and it is currently being worked through the normal committee process and will be part of an omnibus bill that goes through.

Ms. BROWN. Just one small question. What criteria do you use to determine what functions are contracted out?

Mr. METZLER. The functions that are normally repetitive type of maintenance that are done throughout the year are the items that we contract out the most. We have resisted greatly any function with the interment aspect of Arlington cemetery because that is the most sensitive and the one we feel we can do best with government employees.

But mowing grass, doing janitorial type of work, trimming grass, setting headstones, raising, realigning, cleaning headstones, those types of repetitive maintenance year after year, day after day, lend themselves best to contracting.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I would recommend that we talk with the committee leadership, the Chairman and the Ranking Member, concerning getting some authorization for a study to address these immediate needs. I hope that that will be one of the recommendations that we can get out of this hearing.

Mr. EVERETT. Absolutely. I want to thank the panel and also thank you for the tour yesterday. I shall return. I will be back over for another one.

Mr. METZLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We welcome you back any time.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much.

Ms. BROWN. One thing. I would like to have the tour. You all just kept changing the time earlier and earlier. You did not want me

to come. But I want a tour at another time, Mr. Chairman. 6:30 or 6 o'clock was just too early for me.

Mr. BURKE. It's too early for all of us.

Mr. METZLER. I will commit to you, since I live there on the grounds of the cemetery, that you may come any time and we will do a tour.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you.

Mr. EVERETT. Thank you very much.

I will now call the next panel and also welcome to our group up here my colleague, Sonny Callahan, who is one of our cardinals, the Chairman of one of the appropriations subcommittees, and he has some questions he would like to put to the panel.

Roger Rapp, Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, and also Vincent Barile, Director of Office of Operations Support.

Mr. Rapp, whenever you are ready, we will have your testimony. If you would please hold it to 5 minutes, I would appreciate it. Your entire testimony will be included in the record

STATEMENT OF ROBERT R. RAPP, ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR MEMORIAL AFFAIRS, NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, ACCOMPANIED BY: VINCENT L. BARILE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF OPERATIONS SUPPORT, NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. RAPP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to share with you our perspective on important issues pertaining to the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration. Before I begin, I want to reiterate that Vincent Barile, the Director of Operations Support, is sitting next to me, and he will assist me today. I do have an oral summary, but my full written statement I submit for the record.

Mr. EVERETT. Without objection.

Mr. RAPP. I appreciate the interest you and members of the subcommittee have shown in support of VA's mission to provide veterans with a dignified final resting place, and to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines.

As a career VA employee since 1972, and a National Cemetery Administration employee since 1982, these are goals which I have supported and all employees throughout the cemetery administration have embraced. I will continue to be an advocate for this noble mission.

I will provide some of National Cemetery Administration's milestones. Since 1973, 13 new national cemeteries have been added to the system. In my time, since 1982, interments have risen from approximately 39,000 a year to nearly 77,000 this fiscal year. Throughout this time, we have believed acquiring and developing land adjacent to our open national cemeteries is an important aspect of providing for continued service to veterans. There are 36 land transfer expansion projects pending at our national cemeteries over the next few years. In the past 5 fiscal years, there have been 25 land acquisitions. During that same period, $140 million has been spent on major construction projects, creating new and ex-

panded cemeteries. Additionally, nearly $70 million more has been spent on minor construction projects.

The State Cemetery Grants Program is a winner. I believe the best way to illustrate this is with the following data: There are 11 States without a national cemetery. Some of them have State veterans' cemeteries offering service for veterans. There are an additional six States without an open national cemetery. Five of these six have State veterans' cemeteries serving them; the sixth, Georgia, will have a State cemetery in the near future.

In 1987 and 1994, two reports to Congress identified a total of 13 sites that had large veterans' populations without a veterans' cemetery to serve them. Cemeteries have been built in two of these sites, San Joaquin Valley in California in 1992 and Tahoma National Cemetery, near Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, in 1997.

National cemeteries are currently under construction at four other sites, and should open later this year or early next fiscal year. They include Saratoga National Cemetery, near Albany, NY; Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, near Chicago; Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery; and the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, near Cleveland, OH.

Although not specified in the Fiscal Year 2000 budget, progress is being made on two other sites identified in those reports. In St. Louis, we have obtained land from the adjacent VA medical center and a $7.5 million expansion project is funded, being planned, and will be constructed.

In Oklahoma, we are proceeding with a contract award this summer for master planning and development of preliminary design documents for a new national cemetery.

This leaves five sites from the report for future consideration. Our position has been, we need to get those now under construction open before we consider those remaining on the list. We should open those four under construction in this fiscal year or early next fiscal year.

The next budget cycle, fiscal year 2001, is our next opportunity to consider these other sites. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I will champion the discussion and consideration in the upcoming budget process. I am aware two of those remaining sites, Southern Florida and Atlanta, have authorizing bills pending action during this session of Congress. Obviously, there is great interest in those sites, as currently nearly 400,000 veterans reside at each place without a veterans' cemetery available to serve them.

Finally, I'd like to make another comment about how we operate the national cemetery system. The National Cemetery Administration is, probably, percentage-wise, the greatest employer of veterans of any entity in the Federal Government. Sixty-nine percent of our employees are veterans, most of whom care for veterans' grave sites. With that note, Mr. Chairman, I conclude my opening statement and would be pleased to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rapp appears on p. 122.]

Mr. EVERETT. Well, thank you very much for appearing here today and taking our questions.

I think we both have a long list—I know I have a long list of questions. I am not going to be able to get to all of them, so I will

be submitting questions to you for the record and they will appear at this point in the record.

(See p. 143.)

Mr. EVERETT. I would like to first divide my questions—and I will try to stay within the 5-minute limit—into two categories. Number one, let me ask you why can't the maintenance of the national cemeteries approach the standards of the American Battlefield Monument Commission cemeteries overseas?

Mr. RAPP. Well, there are a number of issues that distinguish us from those cemeteries. Virtually all of them are World War I and World War II cemeteries that completed all their interments 50 years ago. They have a straightforward grounds maintenance operation with no additional interments or disinterments.

In contrast, virtually all of our cemeteries are active. The cemeteries conducts burials and a amount of day-to-day operations. Many of these cemeteries also have expansion and improvement projects while conducting the amount of burials that we are doing. That is a significant distinction between us and the ABMC.

When I look at the ABMC's funding and look at ours, I think they have significant funding to handle their responsibilities.

Mr. EVERETT. Your maintenance workload, as you know, increases every year as a result of the increased number of interments performed and the fact we have veterans dying off at a little over 1,000 a day. How do you plan to meet the increased maintenance workload with the proposed budget level that was requested?

Mr. RAPP. Perhaps a comment or two about our proposed budget. The proposed budget is $97 million. I can assure you that we can operate the National Cemetery Administration in the fiscal year 2000 with that amount.

Mr. EVERETT. Let me please interrupt you at that point. Yours is $97 and the VSO's budget, independent budget, asked for $106 million. At this point, could you explain the difference between those two or how you see that difference?

Mr. RAPP. Well, personally, I think I like the larger amount.

Mr. EVERETT. It wasn't requested, though, by the administration. That is kind of our point.

Mr. RAPP. That is true. Within the dynamics of developing the budget, the amount that we identified within the National Cemetery Administration was a little bit higher than the $97 million. I believe that number was provided at an earlier hearing back in February. Our internal request was $103 million; somewhere in between the two amounts. The independent budget, I think, probably is one which would address some long-term deferred maintenance. The $97 million budget that we are presenting will allow us to conduct all our interments and handle the day-to-day maintenance, but the issue of some of the long-term deferred maintenance, that was already brought out with your slide show earlier, may have to slide into a future fiscal year.

Mr. EVERETT. Finally, in what geographic areas has VA identified the greatest need for new cemeteries? If you would list those areas, and I know that in your own testimony you say identifying these areas does not obligate the VA to build these national cemeteries there.

Mr. RAPP. Right. One of the advantages of being the last panel witness is you get to listen to all the prior panels, and I would like to make a comment about the issue of planning.

We are planning. Every year we develop plans. They are reviewed, they are updated, they are evaluated, and then they are presented within the broader budget process to compete with other priorities within NCA and within the broader VA. This process includes consideration of new cemeteries. It seems, though, that the ultimate "grade" of our plan is related to whether there is an inclusion in the budget of a specific new cemetery project.

Looking at how the broader budget is developed and considered, projects that are included at the beginning of that process, where I am a champion of them, may not make it all the way through that process when the broader Administration goals and requirements are addressed.

Be that as it may, we do have a plan. In 1994, we submitted a report to Congress that outlined a plan with four strategic aspects. One of them was to extend the service period of open national cemeteries by obtaining additional burial space and looking into different ways to handle cremated remains. I think we are doing that, as evidenced in my earlier oral statement.

A second strategy is to acquire land through purchase or donation. We are doing that.

A third one is to encourage States to develop State cemeteries. We are doing that, and the States have responded. Very well, I might add.

The last strategy is to establish new national cemeteries to serve the interment needs of the aging veteran population. In the 1994 report, seven sites were listed as sites that still needed to have that assessment for a new national cemetery. They are, in alphabetical order: Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI; Miami, FL; Oklahoma City, OK; Pittsburgh, PA; Sacramento, CA; and St. Louis, MO.

Two of those sites, I believe, we are making progress on. The other five remain to be addressed.

I think I answered the question.

Mr. EVERETT. You did, and I would just make a couple of observations. Number one, it appears you are waiting for Congress to tell you to build more of these national cemeteries. There is great demand. There are a couple of bills. Ms. Brown has a bill, I forget who else, somebody else has a bill.

Mr. Barr has a bill; and in addition to that, let me also, with regard to your comments about plans, the majority of the comments I heard from previous testimony was long-range plans, looking at what will happen 15, 20 years out, as we have this increasing number of deaths from our World War II veterans' population. As I said, there are over 1,000 a day now, and we can look for that number to increase drastically.

I think the majority of the questions I heard this morning from the other panelists on planning concerned the long-range planning of how we deal with the interments that we will have to have.

I want to thank you for your time with my questions.

Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN. I will yield a couple more minutes, if you need it.

Mr. EVERETT. That is generous.

Ms. BROWN. I want to just go back to the planning. You said that you think you all have a comprehensive plan. Is that plan updated? You heard the testimony. Can you respond more in-depth? And can we get something in writing on your comprehensive plan?

(See p. 146.)

Mr. EVERETT. And the order of priorities, I noted that you had them in alphabetical order, and I would like to know them in order of need.

Mr. RAPP. In terms of the plan, I believe we have a plan that identifies the sites. I don't believe the sites have changed from what was identified in 1994.

The issue of whether there will be a commitment within the Administration's budget to address these sites, I can only say again that I will champion that discussion and consideration during the next budget cycle.

If I could, I'd like to go back to the Chairman's question of whether we are waiting for Congress to do something.

If we look at the new cemeteries that we are currently building right now, Saratoga, Chicago, Cleveland and Dallas-Fort Worth, virtually all of the early momentum that developed on those sites came from veterans who approached Members of Congress. The Members responded with legislation that generated us to get started. Once the momentum got going, the Administration came through, in most all cases, with budget submissions that showed construction dollars.

So back to the Chairman's question, I think the need is there. It has been stated in our reports, and you have heard the earlier testimonies. I think Congress has a potential assignment that might be useful for all of us.

In terms of your questions, Ms. Brown, I have an awareness of some details regarding the seven sites that may be worth sharing. The State of Georgia has no open veterans' cemetery at this point. And while they are planning to build a smaller State cemetery near Milledgeville, GA, most veterans are not served with any viable option within the State. So I think that speaks for Atlanta's needs.

The largest population of veterans in the State of Florida are in South Florida, and I think that speaks for its priority.

The State of California, along with the Sunbelt States, has increased in population and there is still a large core of veterans in and around Sacramento.

Another site, Pittsburgh/Western Pennsylvania, has been talked about. It looks like Congressman Doyle might be contemplating a bill on that issue.

I think those are the sites that are most needed.

Ms. BROWN. Well, when I spoke of a comprehensive plan and the sites as a part of it, you heard the testimony this morning. In addition, there were other kinds of concerns such as the State cemetery program. You mentioned in your testimony that it is a real viable option. What are you doing to market and explain it to the States?

Mr. RAPP. I have a number of individuals that are on my staff whose job it is to go out and talk to States about the program. Some States have changed their opinion over the last few years and are much more receptive to our discussions. Obviously, a lot of that is related to the 100 percent funding.

My attitude on the State cemetery program is that it is a complement, but it is not meant to assume the National Cemetery Administration's responsibility for the larger geographic areas. I think in your State, Jacksonville could be well-served by a State cemetery.

Ms. BROWN. Absolutely.

Mr. RAPP. In terms of the reaction to the 100 percent funding and to other initiatives, many States are now in the black in terms of their budgets and have a better ability to handle the operational costs. I believe we have nine States that have come forward to say they are interested in the program as a reaction to the 100 percent funding.

There was some concern raised earlier whether we have requested enough in our Fiscal Year 2000 budget submission. If I was asked about whether there is enough money in our submission for the State grant program, I would have to say that it was developed before the signing and passage of the legislation which increased the federal funding to 100 percent. So, if you look at our $11 million request, Mr. Chairman, and other Members, and realize that that was at a 50 percent level, just the mathematics makes me think it is not enough. It probably should be doubled to support the increased funding.

On top of that, we have had significant interest from more and more States that had never talked to us before about State cemeteries.

Ms. BROWN. Just one final question, then, and I will submit the others in writing.

(See p. 146.)

Ms. BROWN. If there are not sufficient funds to meet all of the grant requests, what criteria will you use to make your awards, or will you ask for additional funds? Where are we?

Mr. RAPP. One of the adjustments made not too long ago to the State grant appropriation was to allow those funds to carry over as no-year funds. So, with some prior-year carryover, the Fiscal Year 1999 budget, and with what we have in the current submission in the Fiscal Year 2000 budget request, I believe we will be able to make grant awards until the third or fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2000.

This time next year, we may find about a 4-month or 5-month period of time when we have grant applications in an approved, unfunded status. A number of things could happen. Hopefully, the Fiscal Year 2001 budget submission would address this and provide additional funding. Other things might happen up here regarding that issue.

I share the concern that was mentioned by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from the State of Wisconsin, and I am optimistic that we won't have a similar problem with our grant program. So far, throughout the whole budget process, the Administration has shown significant support to fund the State grant requests at the levels we have been asking. Our fault perhaps was that we didn't increase it to reflect the hoped-for 100 percent.

Ms. BROWN. I have one final question, Mr. Chairman.

In looking at your plan, it seems as if the Department is planning for 80 percent of the veterans as opposed to 100 percent. Can you explain that, as far as meeting their burial needs?

Mr. RAPP. In terms of this 5-year plan, our strategic goal is to, ultimately, ensure, 80 percent of veterans are within a 75-mile range of an open national or State cemetery. Just a few years ago, we were in the 60 percentile. When these that we are building now open, the four I mentioned earlier, we will be at 77 percent. With the States that are coming on-line or we anticipate will come on-line, we expect to achieve serving 80 percent. Hopefully, we will serve even more than that if we are successful in building some of the other national cemeteries that are on the needs list.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. EVERETT. Certainly. Now I would like to recognize our distinguished colleague from the Appropriations Committee, Mr. Callahan.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. SONNY CALLAHAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Mr. CALLAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to sit in with you today; and Ms. Brown, thank you for permitting me as well. I was in your district weekend before last and had a very enjoyable visit to the college that is in your district, the private college, Jacksonville University.

I made a commencement address there. It is a beautiful campus and a beautiful district. You are well-respected there.

Secretary Rapp, I know that probably you wish I were not here, and I have not come here at the spur of the moment. I have been trying to have a VA cemetery built in my district in Mobile, AL, for about 5 years. I have tried gentle persuasion. I have tried to go through the normal procedure. I have tried everything I know to get you all to build a facility in Mobile where my veterans can be buried.

I know that the thought of building this cemetery might be execrable to many of you in the Veterans' Administration, and I'm sorry about that. But now we are down to the point where I came to the VA 5 or 6 years ago, asked for assistance, and you came up with reasons why you could not. And then you tell me that, bodies can be shipped to Florida or bodies can be shipped to Mississippi, but we have a policy at the Veterans' Administration if there is a cemetery nearby, in the same proximity, within 75 miles or so, that you are not expanding any cemeteries.

So after years of debating this issue with your administration, I finally had to go to Mr. Everett and to Mrs. Brown and to Chairman Stump to, in a sense, force you, through law, to do it, and we did that. This committee instructed you to do it. The full committee instructed you to do it. The President of the United States signed the bill and, thus, he instructed you to do it. Yet we continue to run into barrier after barrier, excuse after excuse as to why it cannot be done.

Mr. Secretary, there is no reason why it cannot be done if indeed your department wanted to do it. Now, I hate to take this unusual step, but I have also gone to the chairman of the VA-HUD subcommittee that I serve on in the Committee on Appropriations. We

appropriated $1.5 million to your agency to expand the cemetery 2 years ago, and not one thing has been done. There is excuse after excuse.

You tell me you went to the city and the city has no more available suitable land. Well, I am sorry about that. The law gave you the authority to spend up to $1.5 million to create this facility.

Now, I don't want to go and fulfill my threat. I don't even consider it a threat, I call it a desperate situation that is going to force me to take the money away from the Veterans' Administration and to give it to the City of Mobile or to the State of Alabama. We are going to buy the land and we are going to require, under law, that you maintain it; that you run the cemetery.

Now, that is seemingly a threat. But, Mr. Secretary, it comes under the situation of being desperate. Why won't you respond?

In February, you came before this committee; and Mr. Everett asked you a lot of questions about the cemetery. And you were very kind; I guess knowing today that I was going to be here, you finally responded to his questions he sent in February saying that you are working on it. But, once again, you gave reasons why there is a delay.

Do you want me to have the President of the United States call you? He calls me to the White House once or twice a month, and he starts telling me about all the things he needs. And I don't think he would hesitate one iota if I told him, Mr. President, I didn't have time to worry about the billions of dollars you are asking us for. I will not hesitate to ask the President to call you if that is what it is going to take.

But I am tired of dillydallying around with this, Mr. Secretary, in all due respect for your professionalism. This brochure is a beautiful tribute to the veterans of America in Wisconsin, but in World War II they didn't just call up people or have people from Wisconsin volunteer. In fact, more people volunteered from the State of Alabama. And now we are telling them that we have this policy that we are going to possibly create this possibility to have you cremated.

We—Mr. Secretary, in all defense, are tired of messing with this. So can you tell me that within the next 30 days you will, indeed, make some aggressive movement to create this new cemetery or to expand it in some manner? I don't care where you build it. I don't care if you build it in downtown Mobile. I just am sick and tired of, since 1962, telling my veterans that they are second-class citizens. You can fix it if you want to.

Now, I would like to know if you think that within the next 30 days you can give me a positive response. And I am sorry to appear aggravated, Mr. Secretary, but just chock it up to frustration on my part. I want to know that within the next 30 days, before we mark up the VA bill that is going to fund all of the programs that you are so vitally interested in, do I have to go to the step of taking that money away from the Veterans' Administration, giving it to the State of Alabama, and asking them to purchase the land and then cramming this down your throat?

I don't want to do that. So please tell me, Mr. Secretary, what can I do? Would a call from the President help? What does it take for me to get something that the Congress has told you to do and

that the Appropriations Committee and the full Congress and the President of the United States has signed into law, a bill, giving you the money to do it?

So, please, Mr. Secretary, tell me today what can I do to assist you in understanding how important this is; that we must make a decision within the next 30 days.

Mr. RAPP. Well, I guess the short answer is that it hasn't been for lack of trying. I have visited the Mobile site twice since the appropriations add-on of $1.5 million. On one occasion, I looked at an approximate 10-acre parcel of land, owned by the City of Mobile, a few blocks down from the 5-acre national cemetery. A review of that land found that it was not acceptable.

Then I visited Mobile, on another occasion, around Memorial Day last year. I spoke at Memorial Day services in Florida, and I came to Mobile specifically to talk to folks about what might be an approximate location in terms of available land. We saw an adjacent cemetery that had what appeared to be suitable land. For about 6 months we negotiated to buy that land. If we did, we could just knock down the wall surrounding the national cemetery, and expand the cemetery. This would have allowed us to achieve what I think you wanted us to achieve. After they considered it, they rejected our offer. We were willing to consider making improvements within their cemetery, but the offer was still rejected.

I apologize for the delay in getting the letter to you.

In that same appropriations bill and law that provided funding for Mobile, there were other add-ons for our program. $1.5 million was added on for us to build a columbarium at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Congress and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee have been supportive of columbaria, recognizing the increased cremation rate in our country. An additional $4 million was added to the Arizona project that was then under consideration for a columbaria.

One of the options I offered back to you was perhaps it may not meet all the needs of veterans, but the $1.5 million could be used to construct a columbarium. Our designers have looked at how we could place it on that site, and we thought that might be an option that could be considered.

You earlier held up the Wisconsin document, that is a State veterans' cemetery. It is a beautiful cemetery. I was there when it was dedicated. The State cemetery program is an option. When I heard that Alabamans did not want to go over into Mississippi or over into Florida to be buried, the first thought that came to my mind was a State veterans' cemetery might fit the bill. A State veterans' cemetery in Alabama could restrict burial to veterans and their family members who are Alabama residents.

Nevertheless, having said that, I certainly don't want to have this hearing lead to the VA's budget being reduced. Frankly, I was hopeful that it might lead to it being increased. Within the next 30 days, I am willing to walk up to your office, sit down, and work out something that, hopefully, will be acceptable to you. If we can find a suitable parcel of land nearby, working together, I think we can do what you want. We will do that.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Secretary, I appreciate that. I will find reasonably priced land nearby. I don't care if it is nearby, if it is with-

in 5 miles, 10 miles, next door or whatever. What I am saying is we seem to be finding reasons why we can't do it.

And I am telling you that I am here to help the Veterans' Administration; that while I will do the same thing for you, I will go to Chairman Walsh and I will say, listen, increase these monies, if I am asked to. I have not been asked to do that. But if you ask me to, I will do that. I will insist he does that.

I will do the same thing with the President of the United States when he calls me to the White House in 2 weeks and tells me he needs $20 billion to rebuild Bosnia, or to rebuild Kosovo and Serbia and to take care of the refugees. I will tell him we will take part of that money and build a decent cemetery to give these veterans in Mobile the same opportunity that veterans have most every place in America, and that is to be buried in their home State nearby their hometown. I know that is basically what you want.

And when I hold up the picture congratulating you on this, this was based on the design. I think your professional design is beautiful. I wanted to use the same professionalism to create an opportunity in Mobile, AL, with or without State participation. I don't care if it is a State cemetery. I don't care what it is. I just want some decision made.

So I will give you that same commitment, to just as aggressively go to the Appropriations Committee and to tell them we need more money for veterans. In a sense, I did that when I got the $1.5 million. We didn't take it out of your administrative expenses. We added to the Veterans Affairs overall budget in order to create this.

So I am pleading with you. You tell me within the next 30 days what we can do. Now, let us not say if the State will do this or if this will happen. You tell me that if you are willing to spend $1.5 million or even a million dollars for 10 acres of land in proximity to the existing cemetery, and I will find you that land.

But I can't be held back by saying the City doesn't own any land. I don't care if another cemetery has some space. And I understand there are problems there. They are finding bodies all over land that has been considered in unmarked graves. So let us abandon that thought and move in another direction and find a suitable facility and buy it and begin the process of creating an opportunity for veterans in Alabama or in Mobile, AL, or in the First Congressional District of Alabama to be buried in a decent ceremony there.

Mr. Chairman, I apologize profusely for taking so much of your time and of your committee's time, but this is a very big concern of mine. I cooperate with every agency up here, with everything that Ms. Brown needs. In fact, we just got the Coast Guard to deed over the property to Jacksonville University. I do all these things and cooperate with the President, cooperate with the administrative branch, cooperate with the Democrats, cooperate with the Republicans, and then I get shoved around, in a sense, with all this bureaucracy and I am unable to deliver to my own constituents.

So with your pledge to get with me within the next 30 days, I will find you 10 acres of land; and let us find a way to do this instead of a way not to do it.

And I thank you very much for your time and, Mr. Chairman, for your inviting me to come and to sit on your panel today.

Mr. EVERETT. My pleasure, Mr. Callahan, and a grateful Nation appreciates your generosity to us. I have a statement of yours that will, without objection, be submitted for the record.

[The prepared statement of Congressman Callahan appears on p. 73.]

Mr. EVERETT. I want to thank all our witnesses today for appearing. I particularly want to thank my Ranking Member for her interest that she has had in this hearing.

Based on what we have heard today, the VA has indeed failed to advance any definite plan for new national cemeteries. Yet with World War II veterans dying at a rate of 1,000 a day, the need for a new national cemetery has never been greater. If these veterans are truly "The Greatest Generation," as Tom Brokaw's recent book about World War II veterans is entitled, then how can this country turn its back on them when it comes time to render to them this final honor?

Are we going to tell them that they are not going to have the same honor of burial in national cemeteries that previous generations of veterans because there are too many of them or because the country, at the height of its prosperity cannot afford it? If the VA and the administration are not going to act, then we in the Congress will have to consider what we can do.

Finally, it is clear that both the national cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery have too much deferred maintenance, even though they are being kept up currently as well as resources will allow. The instances of dirty and tilting headstones, crumbling walkways and deteriorating cemetery buildings makes me feel ashamed that our country is not taking better care of its national shrines. I hope this oversight hearing is a significant step towards identifying the needs of our veterans' cemeteries and securing the funding to fully address them.

Finally, just let me say I happened to see in one of our Hill newspapers today that in the emergency supplemental bill, we appropriated, Ms. Brown, a little over $5 million to build a new dorm and remodel dorms for our pages. Now, I don't argue with that. Our pages that we bring up here deserve a decent place to live, and they don't have that right now. But surely, if we can do that for our pages, we can do more for our veterans.

Thank you very much. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:12 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Oversight Hearing on Maintenance and Space Planning at Arlington National Cemetery and the National Cemetery Administration
May 20, 1999

CHAIRMAN TERRY EVERETT

OPENING STATEMENT

The hearing will come to order.

Good morning! This Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing will examine the maintenance of national cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery. We will also examine the VA's strategic planning for future cemetery needs, including construction of new cemeteries. This is a good time to be taking stock, as Memorial Day approaches.

"Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead, I will measure exactly the sympathies of the people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals." These words are attributed to William E. Gladstone in *American Century*, 1938. They are as true today as they were then.

One of the most visible benefits a veteran will receive is a burial plot in a national or state cemetery. These cemeteries are tangible evidence of the country's appreciation for the sacrifices made by these men and women.

We have a special debt to those who risked their lives for our liberty. Burial in a national or state cemetery is the final remembrance that forever honors the veterans who served in this country's armed services.

Our country is at a point where we have one the greatest demands in history for national cemetery space. The average age of the veteran population is rising and World War II veterans are dying at a rate of 1,000 a day.

Despite the demographic trend for the next decade, the VA seems to have no plans to construct new cemeteries. Unless there are such plans, the VA is reneging on an understanding with the Veterans' Affairs Committee that when the Committee increased funding for new state veterans cemeteries from 50% to 100% of initial costs, the VA would plan new national cemeteries. The Committee delivered the state cemetery funding increase, but the VA has certainly not yet delivered a plan for new national cemeteries. We want to know why not.

Our witnesses today will be the Honorable Helen Chenoweth of Idaho; Veteran Service Organizations and Military Associations; Directors of State Veteran Affairs Departments; and senior officials from the Department of the Army and VA.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the statement of the Honorable Mike Doyle, a member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, and the statement of Sidney Daniels, Deputy Director of the National Legislative Service of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I now recognize our Ranking Democrat, Ms. Brown, for any opening remarks she may have.

CLOSING STATEMENT

I want to thank all of our witnesses for appearing today.

Based on what we heard here today, the VA has indeed failed to advance any definite plan for new national cemeteries. Yet, with World War II veterans dying at a rate of 1,000 a day, the need for new national cemeteries has never been greater.

If these veterans are truly "The Greatest Generation", as Tom Brokaw's recent book about World War II veterans is entitled, then how can this country turn its back on them when it comes time to render their final honor?

Are we going to tell them they are not going have the same honor of burial in national cemeteries as previous generations of veterans, because there are too many of them, or because this country, at the height of its prosperity, cannot afford it?

If the VA and the Administration are not going to act, then we in Congress will have to consider what we should do.

Finally, it is clear that both the National Cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery have too much deferred maintenance, even though they are being kept up as well as current resources permit.

The instances of dirty and tilting headstones, crumbling walkways and deteriorating cemetery buildings makes me feel ashamed that our country is not taking better care of its national shrines. I hope this oversight hearing is a significant step toward identifying the needs of our veterans' cemeteries and securing the funding to fully address them.

The hearing is adjourned.

STATEMENT OF
RANKING DEMOCRAT CORRINE BROWN

Before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
May 20, 1999

On April 29, 1999, I introduced H.R. 1628, a bill that would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a new national cemetery in the Miami, Florida, metropolitan area to serve the needs of veterans and their families. As soon as practicable after enactment, the Secretary must provide Congress with a schedule for the establishment and an estimate of associated costs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs continues to ignore the long-identified national cemetery needs of Southern Florida. In both 1987 and 1994, the Miami area was designated by congressionally mandated reports as one of the top geographic areas in the United States in which need for burial space for veterans is greatest. Yet, as late as August 1998, VA's strategic planning through the year 2010 indicated nothing more than a willingness to continue evaluating the needs of nearly 800,000 veterans in the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale primary and secondary service area. This area of Florida is home to over 54 percent of the estimated state veteran population and 3.3 percent of the total U.S. veteran population. By VA's estimate, there will be nearly 25,000 veteran deaths in the greater Miami area in FY 2000, and by the year 2010, the annual veteran death rate in Southern Florida will be nearly 26,000.

Although VA statistics show that demand for cemetery space will increase sharply in the near future – with burials increasing 42 percent from 1995 to 2010 – the Administration's FY 2000 budget for VA regrettably failed to request the funding required to initiate a single new national cemetery.

The time for evaluating the needs of Southern Florida is long past. The time for action is now. National veterans' cemeteries are not built in a day. It takes at least five-to-seven years to plan and build one. For those who served this country with pride and dignity, VA has an obligation to provide an opportunity to be buried in a national cemetery near their home – an opportunity not now available to those who live in Southern Florida.

It has been the intent of Congress since the establishment of the National Cemetery System in 1862 that the federal government purchase "cemetery grounds" to be used as national cemeteries "for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country." Today, of the 115 national cemeteries administered by VA, only 57 are open to all interments, 36 can accommodate cremated remains and family members of those already interred, and 22 are closed to new interments. In Southern Florida, there is not a veterans' cemetery of any description. If the Memorial Days of the 21st century are to be observed by the families and friends of veterans in Southern Florida at a nearby, appropriate national resting place of honor for an American hero, the mandate of H.R. 1628 is necessary.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MIKE DOYLE (PA-18)

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Hearing on the National Cemetery Administration

May 20, 1999

Thank you Chairman Everett and Ranking Member Brown for extending the opportunity to Members of the House to testify before the Subcommittee today in regards to legislation that they have introduced that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in various regions of the country.

As I recognize that your primary jurisdiction of responsibility does not comprise legislative initiatives, I appreciate your efforts to accommodate Members' concerns within the purview of today's hearing on the National Cemetery Administration. It is my understanding that the Subcommittee on Benefits is planning to hold a hearing in the near future on the need for additional national cemeteries and it is my hope that they will be as equally accommodating to those who wish to state their views and express their concerns.

Just as with all VA services and benefits, the demands placed on the National Cemetery Administration are overwhelming. Clearly, adequate funding levels and improved systems of strategic planning would greatly improve the integrity of many VA programs, including the National Cemetery Administration. Given the budgetary constraints imposed by years of flat-funded appropriations, I recognize your current efforts in relation to the new cemeteries that are slated to be opened later this year in Chicago, Dallas/Ft.Worth, Saratoga, and Cleveland. The needs of veterans in the tri-state region surrounding Pittsburgh however, continue to go unmet. The two national cemeteries that exist in Pennsylvania are located in the eastern part of the state in Annville and Philadelphia.

As many of you are aware, the Congressional District in western Pennsylvania that I have the privilege to represent is the second oldest population in the nation which includes a disproportionately large number of veterans. VISN 4, the fourth largest in the country, is comprised of 1.6 million veterans. It has been projected that by 2005, the overall number of veterans age 75 and older will increase by 37% (nearly 90,000) from 244,000 to 334,000. I have serious concerns about many VA health care related issues that will be impacted by this demographic imperative, but I also have great concern about the increase in need for a national cemetery that will also occur. This is not to say that there is not currently a great need for a national cemetery in this area, there unquestionably is.

In an effort to spur progress on the construction of a national cemetery in Pittsburgh, I will be introducing legislation that directs the Secretary to do so. While I realize that legislative measures are not the standard method of establishing national cemeteries, I do feel it is an important and necessary means of drawing increased attention to the matter. I am encouraged by recent correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs that indicates Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania continues to be one of seven areas that have been identified as being in the greatest need of a national cemetery according to National Cemetery Administration's 1987 and 1994 reports.

It is my hope that today's Subcommittee hearing, in concert with the efforts of the Benefits Subcommittee, will facilitate more timely completion and expanded construction of national cemeteries.

STATEMENT
RANKING MEMBER LANE EVANS

O&I Subcommittee Hearing on
ARLINGTON AND VA CEMETERY SYSTEM
MAY 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Brown, I appreciate your holding this important hearing on national cemeteries as we prepare to observe Memorial Day.

Our veterans' cemeteries are America's national shrines. Most are beautifully fitting. Unfortunately, some of our older ones are in serious need of the maintenance that has been deferred because of past under-funded budgets. Backlogged maintenance projects must be brought up to standard.

Just as importantly, veterans must be provided with adequate access to burial in a national cemetery.

Unfortunately, the Department of Veterans Affairs has not demonstrated a commitment to establishing obviously-needed new national cemeteries.

It is imperative that we, as a Nation, meet our historic commitment to provide a hallowed final resting place for our American heroes when they die. I will be interested in discussing this matter with VA.

Statement of Representative Helen Chenoweth
Before the Veterans Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
May 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for inviting me to testify before the Committee today. I am so grateful for the work you and the members of the subcommittee are doing to review the Veterans Cemetery system. This is an issue that is timely and very important to the people of Idaho.

We expect our Veterans to fight for their nation abroad. But it breaks my heart when they have to fight with their nation at home.

In Idaho, Veterans are forced into one final choice between their home and their patriotism. No Idaho Veteran may be laid to rest in his home state in a dedicated field of honor. This is because my home state is the only state in the union which does not have a Veterans cemetery.

Veterans represent approximately ten percent of Idaho's population. There are nearly one hundred thousand combat Veterans in Idaho -- a third of whom served our nation in World War II. Our average World War II veteran is 76 years old. These heroes are now passing away. This summer, when veterans organizations call the roll of those who have died in the last year, they will read 2,300 names, and not ONE will be buried in an Idaho veterans cemetery.

Mr. Chairman, that is a national disgrace.

That is why I am introducing legislation which will provide Idaho with a Veterans Cemetery. This bill answers a critical need Idaho faces. In pressing for a veterans cemetery, I know I have the support of the entire Idaho congressional delegation, the state veterans organizations, our governor, the Idaho legislature, and the Chairman of the full Committee, Mr. Stump.

In fact, last month the Idaho Legislature passed Joint Memorial 1 which "urgently requested" a veterans cemetery states, quote: "It is fitting and proper that a grateful nation should provide a burial site within a reasonable distance from the homes of those Idahoans and others residing in the northwestern states who honorably served their country in a time of emergency."

In a time when we were threatened, our veterans defended us. In a time when we were afraid, our veterans kept their courage. In a time when we have discarded patriotism, our veterans still salute the flag, honor their Commander-in-Chief and defend liberty. Our veterans are our heroes, and they deserve the final honor of burial in an Idaho veterans cemetery.

On a final note, Mr. Chairman, I think that you and I and the other members of the Veterans Affairs Committee understand that there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of active duty military today, and the treatment of the Veterans of yesterday's service.

Retention, morale, readiness -- these words are euphemisms used to disguise the real problem our military faces: Our servicemen, both past and present, cannot have faith that their government will take good care of them.

A sign in front of the Boise Veterans Medical Center reads: "The price of freedom is visible here." Indeed it is. Unfortunately, in our society a select few pay that price. They are Veterans. And we must show them -- our heros of past conflicts, and those who stand guard as we speak -- that we care, that we are grateful, that we will not fail them.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for giving me this opportunity to testify. I ask each member of this committee to help me pay respect to the men and women who have secured our freedoms. I ask for your support in helping Idaho to recognize and properly honor its brave defenders.

LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF IDAHO
Fifty-fifth Legislature First Regular Session - 1999

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 01

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of the State of Idaho assembled in the First Regular Session of the Fifty-fifth Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

WHEREAS, Idaho is the only state in the nation without either a national veterans cemetery or a state veterans cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the majority of the states without a national cemetery are located in the Northwest; and

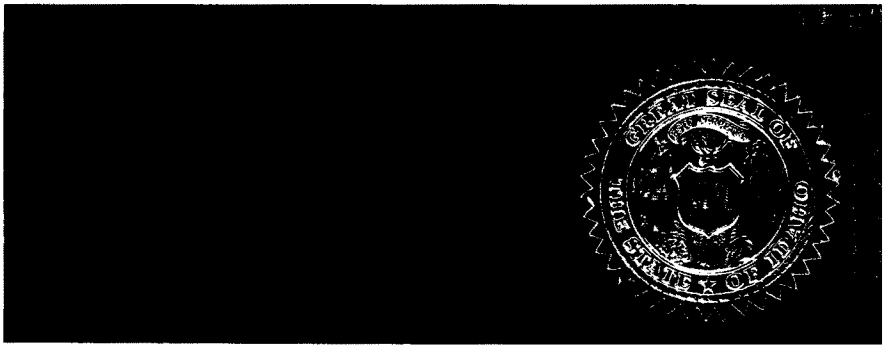
WHEREAS, only one of the six states bordering Idaho has a national cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Idaho is centrally located for a regional cemetery in the Northwest; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that a grateful nation should provide a burial site within a reasonable distance from the homes of those Idahoans and others residing in the northwestern states who honorably served their country in a time of emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular Session of the Fifty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we respectfully and urgently request members of Idaho's congressional delegation to support funding for a national veterans cemetery in Idaho to serve veterans in the northwestern states.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Congress, and the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.



Remarks
by
Congressman Sonny Callahan

House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

May 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and the chairman of the full Committee, Mr. Stump, for allowing me to sit on this distinguished panel today to express my views and ask questions on a matter of extreme importance to the veterans of Mobile, Alabama and its surrounding communities in the first district.

Mr. Chairman, more than two years ago, several veterans came to my office and expressed their concern that an active VA cemetery did not exist in South Alabama. Consequently, they asked me to assist them in either expanding the existing Mobile National Cemetery, which closed to initial interments in 1962, or to open a new cemetery somewhere within the city limits of Mobile, Alabama.

In 1997, Mr. Stump arranged a briefing by officials of the National Cemetery System for Todd Rich of my staff. In this briefing, these officials expressed hesitation to expand the existing cemetery in Mobile primarily because of the close proximity of Barrancas National Cemetery in Florida and Biloxi National Cemetery in Mississippi. Furthermore, they informed Mr. Rich that the land identified for the proposed expansion (the Hartwell Field site) was unsuitable for burials.

It is important to note that, during the briefing, the officials stated if I was insistent about expanding the cemetery, I should consider other areas within the city of Mobile (but not necessarily near the existing cemetery) to use as a VA cemetery. Agreeing that the Hartwell Field site was unsuitable, I subsequently let them know I would not object to the construction of a cemetery in an area away from the existing cemetery as long as the property is within the city limits of Mobile.

In the FY 1998 VA, HUD appropriations bill, $1.5 million was included to expand the existing national cemetery in Mobile. The report language states:

The second amendment adds $1.5 million to VA's construction minor projects account for expansion of the existing National Cemetery at Mobile, AL. This will permit the development of 10 acres of city-owned land for burial of veterans in the Mobile area.

Although, the National Cemetery System has unsuccessfully negotiated with various organizations, including the Springhill Temple to locate suitable land adjacent to the existing cemetery, no effort has been made to consider land in other areas. Consequently, to this date the Mobile National Cemetery has not been expanded and veterans' families in my district

must continue travel to other states to bury their loved ones who served our great country so proudly.

It has been brought to my attention that in lieu of making additional land available to the Mobile National Cemetery, the National Cemetery System would prefer to build columbaria on the existing site.

I feel a columbaria would provide a nice addition to the cemetery to serve those veterans who express the desire to be cremated and I encourage the National Cemetery System to pursue this option. However, I feel strongly that, regardless of the construction of columbaria, additional land should be made available to bury those veterans who do not wish to be cremated. A veteran should not have to be cremated to be buried in South Alabama.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly request you encourage the National Cemetery System to abide by the language in the FY 1998 VA, HUD appropriations bill and provide burial space for veterans who live in or around the communities of South Alabama. It is a small price to pay for these veterans who have dedicated their life to serve our country.

Thanks again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to sit on your distinguished panel.

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN BOB BARR (R-GA) BEFORE THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF THE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS ON MAY 20, 1999

I would like to commend Chairman Terry Everett, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, for holding a hearing today on a very important issue facing our veterans.

Today the Subcommittee focused on the fact that military cemeteries are running out of space. World War II servicemen the generation of soliders who saved the world from tyranny, are dying at a rate of more than 1,000 a day. It is getting harder and harder to provide the necessary cemetery space in which our honored dead may rest.

The Veterans Administration estimates that the veteran death rate will increase from 550,000 in 1998, to a peak of 620,000 in 2008. There is no specific date when most cemeteries would be out of space, but the Veterans Administration believes the burial space will last only until 2030. Insofar as it takes five to seven years to plan and build a national cemetery, steps need to be taken now to begin to ensure that our nation's veterans have a final resting spot.

The Atlanta region is in desperate need of more space for veterans. In this regard, I have I introduced legislation vital to all veterans in the state of Georgia. My legislation, H.R. 1249, directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a national cemetery for veterans in the Atlanta, Georgia metropolitan area. This bill is co-sponsored by the entire Georgia delegation. Senators Max Cleland and Paul Coverdell have introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

Our nation has a sacred obligation to fulfill the promises we made to our veterans, when they agreed to risk and, in many cases, give their lives to protect the freedoms we all enjoy. One of those promises was a military burial in a national cemetery.

In 1994, the Department of Veterans Affairs released its "Report on the National Cemetery System." The Atlanta area was listed within the top 10 areas in the country with the greatest need for burial space. This need has only increased dramatically in the past few years. Establishing a national cemetery in Georgia would provide veterans and their families accessibility and the recognition they deserve.

Georgia currently has only one national cemetery, located in Marietta. However, this cemetery has been *full since the 1970s*. The nearest national cemeteries accepting burials are located in other states -- Alabama and Tennessee. In addition to meeting the needs of veterans living in Georgia, placing a new national cemetery in the Atlanta area will alleviate the increasing demands on the cemeteries in Tennessee and Alabama.

Neither of the sites in Tennessee and Alabama is reasonably accessible to most of the more than 700,000 veterans living in Georgia, including some 450,000 veterans in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

This legislation is supported by Pete Wheeler, Commissioner of the Georgia Veteran's Association, and by the Georgia Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other veterans' groups. I ask all veterans groups to support this legislation because it is only appropriate for Georgia's heroes to be allowed to be laid to rest in their home state.

This has been a long awaited process for Georgia veterans. These men and women deserve a proper resting place. Chairman Everett, and the Subcommittee on Oversight, today has began to focus on how to provide for our veterans in Georgia and in the United States into the next century.

Since coming to Congress I have been fully committed to ensuring that the needs of our military veterans are met to the fullest extent possible. Veterans fought to protect our freedoms and way of life. As they served our nation in a time of need, the government must remember them in their time of need. The people of the U.S. owe our veterans a great deal and should keep the promises made to them, and treat our veterans with the respect that they deserve. I will continue to fight to establish a new veterans cemetery in Georgia.

STATEMENT OF
JOY ILEM
ASSOCIATE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MAY 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you to present the views of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) concerning the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Our discussion will encompass issues facing national and state cemeteries, including Arlington National Cemetery. Our membership, made up of more than one million service-connected disabled veterans and a Women's Auxiliary, has a genuine interest in ensuring that national and state cemeteries throughout the Nation, including Arlington, are adequately funded and maintained to meet increasing burial needs of the veteran population.

Cemeteries under NCA control are considered national shrines, sacred memorials to honor the memory of those interred or memorialized there. The National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-43) established the National Cemetery System within the VA and affirmed a veteran's right to burial within this system. The passage of the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-368) redesignated the National Cemetery System as the National Cemetery Administration (NCA). The NCA provides interment of eligible veterans and their family members upon demand in national cemeteries and operates and maintains 115 national cemeteries located in 39 states and Puerto Rico. In fiscal year 1998, NCA provided burial benefits to 76,718 veterans and their family members and had an appropriation of $84 million for interment and related program services.

As a Nation we are charged with fulfilling promises made to all veterans who have served their country honorably and faithfully and who are entitled to a decent burial and final resting place. We must place the highest priority on delivery of these benefits and meet our obligation to the brave men and women who fought in defense of this great Nation. Eligible veterans and dependents should be assured of this final honor, bestowed by a grateful nation, without concern that the resources necessary to provide this important benefit may be unavailable. Adequate funding and long-range planning are essential to the success of NCA's mission. Budgetary shortfalls result in reduced services to veterans, cemetery neglect, and the inability of NCA to complete its mission of honoring veterans with a final resting place and lasting memorials that commemorate their service to this Nation.

LONG-TERM CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CEMETERIES

By the year 2000, NCA plans to have 119 national cemeteries devoted to the memorialization of veterans and eligible dependents. Four new national cemeteries, located in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas; Albany, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; and, Chicago, Illinois, are expected to open for burial operations in 1999. Of the 115 existing national cemeteries, only 57 are able to provide the full range of services to America's veterans and their families. Approximately 25 cemeteries are closed to new burials and 33 are open only to cremated remains and family members of those already interred.

According to its 5-year strategic plan (1998-2003), one of NCA's primary goals is to ensure that burial in an open national or state veterans' cemetery is an available option for all eligible veterans and their family members. It is estimated that more than 552,000 veterans died in 1998. NCA projects that interments will peak at approximately 620,000 in 2008. Therefore, expansion of NCA over the next 10 years is critical to meeting the significant burial demands

that will be placed on the system in the near future. Although NCA's strategic plan notes that death rates are expected to increase by 25% between 1995 and 2010, its plans to address burial demand beyond 2003 are unclear. To meet the burial needs of veterans in the future, it is essential that NCA develop strategies now for obtaining adequate funds, acquiring land, and assessing veterans' burial preferences. Through its construction program, VA should explore all opportunities to keep cemeteries open. Acquisition of adjacent lands and construction of columbaria where possible is imperative.

The rapidly aging veteran population and the accelerated death rate of World War II veterans has complicated resource challenges facing NCA. We acknowledge the dedicated staff of NCA who, despite budgetary constraints, decreased staffing levels, and increasing workload, have provided exemplary high-level service to eligible veterans and their families. However, the system's ability to meet the increasing demand for burial benefits in the years to come is contingent on a comprehensive long-term planning strategy and sound implementation methodology coupled with adequate funding, and absence of such a long-term focus is one of the DAV's main concerns.

The time for NCA to act is now, given the magnitude of the projected increase in demand for burial benefits over the next ten years, and length of time that is needed to plan, develop and finalize a cemetery for operation. Three areas of primary concern for NCA include building new national cemeteries, expanding existing cemeteries, and encouragement of states to provide additional burial sites through participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program. As we will discuss below, additional challenges facing NCA include the issues of deferred maintenance and contracting for services.

Thus, DAV is greatly concerned that if the NCA does not formalize long-term burial plans within a reasonable period, it will experience extreme difficulty or be unable to meet the burial needs of eligible veterans and their dependents during the peak years. By law, the NCA is only required to provide a 5-year strategy plan. However, if NCA continues to limit its basic strategy to 5-year increments, it will unlikely be able to meet veterans' burial needs well into the future. Congress and the VA must commit to a policy of ensuring adequate burial space for all eligible veterans and their families who desire burial in a national or state veterans' cemetery.

In addition to its primary burial responsibility, NCA also manages the State Cemetery Grants Program, which provides aid to states in establishing, expanding, or improving state veterans' cemeteries. Public Law 105-368 allows states to receive 100% funding from VA to establish state veterans' cemeteries. Although the new fully funded grant program encourages states to establish cemeteries to meet the demands of the aging veteran population and the rising interment rate, the expanded program creates new funding challenges for the program.

Some states have expressed reservations in utilizing the grant program to establish new cemeteries because of the recurring costs to the states to maintain the cemeteries once they are established. Others believe the financial burden is, and should remain, solely on the Federal government. However, with the veteran population rapidly approaching its peak years of need, many national cemeteries have depleted their inventory of available gravesites. In some cases, state veterans' cemeteries could lessen the impact of unavailability at national cemeteries. Unfortunately, many states have shown limited interest in accessing grants available to develop state veterans' cemeteries.

Recently, NCA officials held a conference to discuss legislative and policy changes; to review new and existing cemetery construction projects; and to look at VA's $97 million fiscal year 2000 budget proposal for NCA. A top official indicated the $97 million budget proposal will allow the NCA to function in a challenged capacity. It was noted that VA plans to continue cemetery construction under both the state cemetery grant program and the national system. However, there is no official plan to develop additional national cemeteries during fiscal year 2000. It was acknowledged that the $11 million budget for the State Cemetery Grants Program, approved when the Federal grant was 50% of the total cost, has not been increased although Public Law 105-368 authorized 100% funding for state cemetery construction. Adequate funding should be available to ensure all approved state cemetery grant applications will be funded.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AND CONTRACTING FOR SERVICES

NCA is faced with budgetary constraints and an emphasis on a reduced and more efficient government workforce. Over the years, NCA has struggled to maintain the appearance of its 115 national cemeteries. Successive years of restrained budgets have made it extremely difficult for NCA to address long-term operational and field management needs. Budgetary shortfalls have forced the system to focus on high priority projects and often defer important preventative maintenance and infrastructure repairs. Cemetery operations include interment and grounds maintenance, both of which are labor-intensive activities. Grounds maintenance is an important component of the NCA, and its unique maintenance needs can only be met through adequate staffing. The staffing needs of NCA have become more critical as the interment rate has increased. In the past some national cemeteries were not being appropriately maintained with reported long-standing deficiencies including poorly tended lawns and sunken gravesites due to inadequate funding and lack of proper maintenance equipment. Neglect of these national cemeteries was considered shameful. Additional funding is essential to acquire additional full-time personnel to carry out important maintenance projects and maintain cemeteries as befitting national shrines.

Contracting cemetery maintenance is, of course, an option. Arlington National Cemetery utilizes contracted services and provides us with the benefit of experience by which to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of contracting. Arlington National Cemetery remains one of the Nation's most revered shrines. The cemetery consists of 612 acres with more than 250,000 gravesites maintained by independent funding administered through the Department of the Army. Arlington has functioned as a military burial ground and the site of major memorial events and ceremonies since it was founded in 1864. Arlington averages 5,000 funerals per year and hosts more than 4 million visitors. The costly ceremonial and public missions associated with Arlington remain an integral part of its basic operation.

Expanded use of contracts for specific grounds maintenance functions has allowed Arlington to achieve operational efficiencies. However, burial rates and other ceremonial cemetery operations have steadily continued to increase. The expanded use of contracting has permitted greater flexibility in assigning cemetery personnel to critical burial and maintenance operations. With regard to Arlington, however, it is imperative that there is effective oversight of contract functions. Individuals with specific contracting expertise are needed to achieve quality results with reasonable cost. Additional contract specialists should be added to the Arlington staff.

Cemetery operations require an adequate complement of administrative personnel to ensure that the cemetery functions at an optimum level and that the grounds are maintained to shrine-like standards. High maintenance standards expected at national cemeteries require increased funding to address aging and deterioration of infrastructure —roads, utilities, buildings, and memorials. Specialized projects such as repair of sunken gravesites and misaligned headstones must not be neglected. Additional Congressional funding is necessary to ensure critical grounds maintenance needs are addressed.

In recognition of the need for development of additional national cemeteries we appreciate the introduction of H.R. 1476, the National Cemetery Act of 1999, by Representative Lane Evans (D-IL). Congressman Evans' bill would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery in each of the three areas in the United States determined to be in most need of such a cemetery to serve the needs of veterans and their families.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. We appreciate the Subcommittee's interest in these issues and the opportunity to present our views. I will be glad to answer any questions you or members of the Subcommittee may have.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
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FACT SHEET

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

JOY J. ILEM
Associate National Legislative Director
Disabled American Veterans

Joy J. Ilem, a U.S. Army service-connected disabled veteran, was appointed Associate National Legislative Director of the million-member-plus Disabled American Veterans (DAV) on April 3, 1999.

Ms. Ilem is employed at DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. As a member of the DAV's legislative team, she works to promote and defend reasonable and responsible legislation to assist disabled veterans and their families.

Ms. Ilem began her DAV career as a member of Class III at National Service Officer Training Academy in Denver. Following graduation from the academy in 1996, she was assigned as a NSO Trainee at the National Service Office in Phoenix, Ariz. In 1997, she was assigned as a National Appeals Officer with the DAV staff at the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C., where she served until her current appointment.

A native of Shakopee, Minn., Ms. Ilem was raised in the greater Minneapolis area, and is a 1977 graduate of Grace Tontino High School in Fridley, Minn. She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona at Tucson in 1994, where she majored in archaeology, with a minor in religious studies.

Ms. Ilem enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1982. Following basic training at Ft. Jackson, S.C., and advanced medical training at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, she was assigned as a combat medic to the 67th Evacuation Hospital in Wurzburg, Germany, where she underwent additional certification as an emergency medical technician (EMT). Ms. Ilem's military duties included emergency room assignments and non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of recovery room operations. She was honorably discharged from the Army in 1985.

A life member of DAV Chapter 1, Washington, D.C., Ms. Ilem resides in Washington, D.C.

May/99



DISCLOSURE OF FEDERAL GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) does not currently receive any money from any federal grant or contract.

During fiscal year (FY) 1995, DAV received $55,252.56 from Court of Veterans Appeals appropriated funds provided to the Legal Service Corporation for services provided by DAV to the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. In FY 1996, DAV received $8,448.12 for services provided to the Consortium. Since June 1996, DAV has provided its services to the Consortium at no cost to the Consortium.

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A Not-For-Profit Veterans Service Organization Chartered by the United States Congress

Statement of

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Submitted by

Richard Weidman
Director
Government Relations Department

Before the

House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation

Regarding

Long-Term Construction of New Cemeteries

May 20, 1999

Vietnam Veterans of America

House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation
Long-Term Construction of New Cemeteries
May 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) thanks you for this opportunity to express our views concerning the maintenance and future of our federal and states' veterans cemetery system.

Burial in a veterans cemetery is a cherished privilege for veterans across this country, and is a lasting symbol of this nation's gratefulness to veterans for the sacrifices they have borne in its defense. VVA ardently believes that these cemeteries must be kept up to the highest standards, and that every veteran who so desires, will have a final resting place in a veterans cemetery.

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) of the Department of Veterans Affairs is the agency responsible for the operation of our national veterans cemeteries. As the veteran population is rapidly aging, the demands on NCA are in turn, rapidly increasing. Internments are projected to peak at 107,000 in the year 2008, according to NCA. Unfortunately, there is no strategic plan in place for beyond the year 2000. VVA believes this situation desperately needs to be fixed. At present, approximately a thousand veterans a week are dying, many of whom wish to be buried in a National Cemetery. Planning for this already heavy load to double in the next eight to nine years is a real challenge, and must be systematically addressed now.

While the majority of the deaths among veterans are World War II veterans, it is instructive to point out that over 1.2 million of the 9.3 million men and women who served during Vietnam have expired as of this time last year. Even if one subtracts those Vietnam veterans who were older, and who had prior service in World War II from that 1.2 million, there have still been more than 750,000 Vietnam veterans who have died since the Vietnam War. Some scientists have given VVA a rough estimate that half of Vietnam "in-country" veterans will be dead as early as 2008 to 2010. This troubled us enough that our President has written to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to try to prompt a more thorough mortality study and projections for Vietnam veterans.

Further exacerbating this problem of an increasing workload is the lack of burial space available to meet the high demand. There are 115 national cemeteries. 33 of these cemeteries are only open to cremated remains, 57 are open to internments, and 25 are closed to new internments. We applaud the efforts of NCA in scheduling the opening of 4 new national cemeteries. These national cemeteries are scheduled to open in Saratoga, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; and Dallas / Ft.Worth, Texas. These new national cemeteries will certainly alleviate some of the problem, however, many major population centers remain undeserved. The NCA must exercise foresight and closely examine the burial needs of veterans in several major population centers.

Again, NCA is facing a tough challenge in the years ahead. The veteran death rate will increase by 25% through the year 2005. During this time frame, internment is projected to increase by 40%. The NCA is doing a good job during this time of limited budgets and an increased workload. The NCA FTEE have decreased, as has every other area of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The need, however, to increase the staffing level of NCA is becoming more urgent every year. There is a very legitimate need for increased funding and personnel.

VVA agrees with other major veteran service organizations that NCA needs to be funded at $106 million for FY 2000. This sum is needed in order to meet the higher costs for administrative expenses as the internments increase. To offset the reduction in employees since 1997, this amount would enable NCA to maintain current operations, to accomplish many of the needed deferred maintenance projects pending, and fund the restoration of 80 full-time employee equivalents (FTEEs). The bottom line is that NCA currently does not have the resources to adequately handle the huge job that is on the horizon.

A curtailed budget has served to force the NCA to "triage" its resources. Only those national cemeteries with immediate and urgent maintenance problems receive repairs while other crucial preventative maintenance and infrastructure projects are delayed. Long term operational and

management demands are not being addressed. While the significant shortfall of funds appropriated versus funds that are actually needed for basic operation make it neccesary to allocate carefully and "juggle" the priorities in a 'crisis management' mode of operation, VVA would maintain that a better job can possibly be done with existing resources. The NCA can do a better job only if they pay more attention to planning, particularly in the years leading up to 2008.

State run veteran cemeteries serve the burial needs of thousands of veterans. Over the last two decades the VA has provided over $57 million in grants to State veterans cemeteries for construction, expansion, and improvements. NCA is now solely administering the State Cemetery Grants Program, which provides financial assistance for the purchase of burial space by state veteran cemeteries. Under PI-105-368, states are now permitted to receive 100% funding from the NCA to establish a state veteran cemetery. VVA urges Congress to appropriate $10 million for the funding of state veteran cemetery grant applications.

Arlington National Cemetery is hallowed ground to Americans of all backgrounds and all regions of this nation. With about 5,000 funerals per year, major memorial ceremonies, and 4 million visitors per year, Arlington National Cemetery is a very busy place that demands constant upkeep. Although, Arlington is administered by the Department of the Army and is funded as an independent agency, VVA is compelled to comment on this most sacred American shrine due to its importance to veterans. VVA urges Congress to ensure that Arlington remain open for internment until 2035 or later, and open for cremated remains for an undetermined period.

Due to its old age (Arlington was opened in 1864), Arlington's infrastructure is in need of modernization of basic infrastructure systems. We believe its $12 million budget needs to be augmented by $5 million in order to meet the needs of this national treasure.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. I will be glad to address any questions you or your colleagues may have for me.

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General Background

-Knowledgeable in employment, health care, and housing issues that affect veterans
-Extensive communications strategy design and implementation experience
-Maintain good working relationship wide the full range of veterans' organizations from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and The American Legion to Black Veterans for Social Justice and Swords to Plowshares. An active member of Vietnam Veterans of America and several other veterans' groups

Work History

Director of Government Relations **Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) - National Office** Responsibilities include initiating and coordinating all facets of interaction and advocacy for VVA (Please note that served as *Director, Membership Affairs* for VVA from June through October of 1998.)	June 1998 to Present Washington, D.C.
Principal **Weidman Associates** (Clients include Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund, U.S. Department of Energy, National Coalition *for* Homeless Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of California, LA Vets, Swords to Plowshares	January 1997 to June 1998 Washington, D.C.
Special Advisor to the Chairman **Committee on Veterans Affairs** New York State Assembly	Fall 1995 - December 1996 Albany, New York
Director, State Veterans Program **New York State Department of Labor**	Fall 1987 - Spring 1995 Albany, New York
Director of Government Relations **Vietnam Veterans of America**	January 1978 - Fall 1987 Washington, D.C.

Richard F. Weidman
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Other Relevant Experience

- *President*, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Chapter 641, Montgomery County (MD), 1998-99 (Vice President, 1997-98); member of VFW, The American Legion, Jewish War Veterans, and other veterans' groups.
- *President*, Veterans Economic Action (VEA) 1994 to present
- *Member*, National Advisory Council, U.S. Small Business Administration, Dec. 1998 to Present
- *Member and Vice Chairman*, Secretary's Committee on Readjustment of Vietnam Veterans, United States Department of Veterans Affairs - 1982 - 1991
- *Member*, Management Assistance Council (MAC) for "Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) for Combined VISN #2 and #3 - May to December 1996 (helped organize)
- *Member*, Secretary of Labor's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment, 1984 to 1987
- *Member*, Veterans Advisory Committee, U.S. Small Business Administration, 1982 to 1987
- *Member*, Veterans Committee of International Association of Personnel in Employment Security (IAPES) - 1988 to1995 (*Chairman*, 1991-1992)
- Served six years as *Educator* in Vermont State College system; Worked at various times as Dean of Students, as Director of Student Activities, Lecturer in Humanities, and Director of Continuing Education at Johnson State College campus.
- A co-founder and Chairman of the Board of *Project to Advance Veterans Employment (PAVE)*, a statewide veterans' community based organization in Vermont, 1974 to 1980

Education

Business Administration (20 graduate hours)
The University of Vermont

BA, Philosophy and Religion
Colgate University

Military Service

United States Army, 1969 - 1971; Served as 1- A- O Medical Corpsman.
Republic of Vietnam service with AMERICAL Division in 1969;
Soldier of the Month, Ft. Dix, NJ in August 1970;
Honorable Discharge as E-5.

References provided upon request.

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VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Funding Statement
May 20, 1999

The national organization Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is a non-profit veterans membership organization registered as a 501(c)(19) with the Internal Revenue Service. VVA is also appropriately registered with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives in compliance with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995.

VVA is not currently in receipt of any federal grant or contract, other than the routine allocation of office space and associated resources in VA Regional Offices for outreach and direct services through its Veterans Benefits Program (Service Representatives). This is also true of the previous two fiscal years.

For Further Information, Contact:
Director of Government Relations
Vietnam Veterans of America.
(202) 628-2700, extension 127

STATEMENT OF PHILIP R. WILKERSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
THE AMERICAN LEGION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON
THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

MAY 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of its 2.8 million members, The American Legion appreciates the opportunity to comment on the operations of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

The American Legion values the efforts of NCA in guiding the design and construction of six new national cemeteries over the past ten years. Each of the new national cemeteries will serve eligible beneficiaries well into the 21st Century. The current achievements of the NCA could not have been accomplished without excellent leadership and dedication to its mission. However, the task of NCA is not yet complete. Over the next 20 years, the number of projected veterans' deaths will make the job of NCA more formidable.

Enactment of Public Law 105-368, on November 11, 1998, provides NCA with important new tools to meet its future challenges. Today, NCA provides states with 100 percent funding for the construction and initial equipment costs of new state veterans' cemeteries. NCA anticipates the new State Cemetery Grants Program authority will stimulate the development of much-needed veterans' cemeteries. The American Legion believes that, foremost, it is the responsibility of the Federal government to meet veterans' burial needs in the 21st century. Although Public Law 105-368 provides states with important new incentives, there is no substitute for NCA being the lead agent in planning for the burial needs of America's veterans.

Mr. Chairman, Public Law 105-368 did not provide states with all of the necessary incentives to develop new veterans' cemeteries. In addition to the full funding of the construction costs and the initial equipment costs, the long-standing burial plot allowance of $150 paid by the Federal government to the states for each wartime veteran's burial did not change. According to our information, many states are reluctant to commit to the long-term costs associated with maintaining veterans' cemeteries. Accordingly, in order to permit VA's State Cemetery Grants Program to operate at maximum effectiveness, VA must request and Congress approve an increase in the plot allowance and make the allowance applicable to all veterans. In the long-term, an increase in the plot allowance and the expansion of eligibility for payment could help meet the need for the construction of new state veterans' cemeteries, and complement the Federal government's efforts.

Mr. Chairman, increased funding requirements are associated with the construction of six new national cemeteries, and the increasing volume of veterans' deaths. The NCA accomplished approximately 76,000 burials during FY 1998 and maintains over 2 million grave sites. The American Legion acknowledges there has been a responsible increase in the NCA operating budget this decade. From Fiscal Year (FY) 1994 through FY 2000 (President's request level), the NCA operations budget will increase from $70 million to $97 million. Unfortunately, NCA operated at a severe budget deficient for many years and the recent funding increases have not completely closed the long-term funding shortfall. Of the $5 million increase in NCA funding projected for FY 2000, $3.6 million will be aimed at meeting its inflationary costs and employee pay raises.

In addition to the San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery in north central California, and the Tahoma National Cemetery near Seattle, Washington, the following sites will complete the construction of six new national cemeteries during the 1990s:

Location	Scheduled Dedication	Opening
Saratoga National Cemetery Albany, New York	July, 1999	October 1999
Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery Chicago, IL	September 1999	Nov. 1999
Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery Dallas, TX	Fall 1999 (projected)	Fall 1999 (projected)
Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery Cleveland, OH	Winter 1999	Fall 2000

In addition to the four new national cemeteries, major construction projects are planned at existing sites. These are Florida National Cemetery, Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery, Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, and the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona. Some of the new state cemetery grant projects are currently planned at Stockley Center, DE; Little Rock, AR; Milledgeville, GA; Springfield and Higginsville, MO; Augusta, ME, Madison, IN, and two sites in Massachusetts. All of these projects are necessary to meet the expected increase in veterans' deaths over the next 20 years.

Mr. Chairman, The American Legion supports the construction of new national cemeteries in areas of greatest geographic need. Demographic projections of areas with the greatest need include Oklahoma City, OK; Atlanta, GA; northern California (Sacramento); southern Florida (Miami); St. Louis, MO; Pittsburgh, PA; and Detroit, MI. The close coordination of new national cemetery construction in these areas, along with the State Cemetery Grants Program should improve the burial options for a majority of America's veterans. In areas where neither state grants, or national cemetery is available within a reasonable distance, VA and Congress should explore and develop additional options for veterans and their eligible dependents which would afford them benefits comparable to those fortunate enough to be buried in a veterans' cemetery.

Mr. Chairman, historically only about 10 percent of eligible veterans are buried in national cemeteries. The American Legion believes this statistic reflects the lack of accessible open national cemeteries throughout the country. A better indicator of potential demand is the number of VA provided government headstones. In FY 1998, VA provided over 300,000 new headstones and markers. With veterans' deaths projected to peak at 620,000 in 2008, and thereafter reach the current level in 2020, many more veterans and eligible dependents would likely choose burial in a veterans' cemetery, if reasonably available.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to NCA's annual operational funding requirements, there is a need to adequately fund the long-term maintenance needs for its older cemeteries. There are never enough resources to fully meet all of NCA's maintenance projects. The American Legion recommends that NCA provide a complete list of such requirements to Congress for inclusion in annual appropriations requests. The NCA currently does the best job possible in meeting ongoing maintenance requirements. We strongly believe the annual minor construction appropriation must adequately reflect the needs of the system.

The American Legion urges Congress to codify eligibility criteria for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Burial at Arlington should be restricted to servicemembers who die on active duty; to our most decorated veterans to include recipients of the Purple Heart; to veterans who spent full careers in uniform, and to their spouses and eligible children; to former Prisoners of War; and for the President or former Presidents as Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces. The American Legion believes there

should be no waivers for unqualified persons except under unique and compelling circumstances, which comport with codified non-partisan waiver procedures as established by Congress. Eligibility for interment of cremated remains in the Columbarium at Arlington should also be codified. Lastly, The American Legion urges the formation of a representative Government Commission to review and resolve issues related to burials in Arlington National Cemetery.

The American Legion appreciates the efforts of the Department of Defense (DOD) in responding to section 567 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Appropriations Act for FY 1999 (Public Law 105-261). This section directs specific actions to address the growing national concern about the availability of military funeral honors for America's veterans. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with participation from Veterans Service Organizations and others convened a conference over several months to determine how the requirements of the Act would be implemented. The Department of Defense announced its plan on implementing the requirements of the Act on April 21, 1999.

The individual components of the plan include:

Beginning on January 1, 2000, all active duty members, retirees, veterans (as defined by title 38, United States Code, section 101(2) including 38 Code of Federal Regulation, section 3.7) and members and former members of the Selected Reserve will be eligible for Military Funeral Honors.
A toll-free number will be available to request Military Burial Honors. A Web Site will also be available to assist funeral directors, veterans, and families in obtaining funeral honors and registering those groups authorized to provide honors. Upon request of the family of an eligible beneficiary, the Military Services will render minimum funeral honors consisting of the ceremonial folding and presentation of the American flag and the playing of Taps. In fulfilling this mission, both active and reserve forces may be used. Military Burial Honor Guards provided by Veterans Service Organizations may be used to augment the services provided by the Department of Defense.

Mr. Chairman, for the first time, DOD is statutorily obligated to officially recognize the military's obligation to provide funeral honors for veterans, upon request, and is committing resources to that end.

The American Legion believes the DOD plan will be minimally appropriate. We would like to see the military, both active duty and reserve components, be able to do more than the minimum stated, namely, flag folding and Taps. We recognize the actual extent of military participation will undoubtedly depend on available resources and specific locales and distances from military units and bases. Veterans' organizations, like The American Legion, will continue to provide burial honors as it has been doing for years.

Mr. Chairman, that completes this statement.



Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America

225 N. Washington Street • Alexandria, Virginia 22314 • Telephone (703) 549-0311

STATEMENT OF

LARRY D. RHEA

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

AND THE

NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

MAY 20, 1999

Chartered by the United States Congress

DISCLOSURE OF FEDERAL GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

The Non Commissioned Officers Association of the USA (NCOA) does not currently receive, nor has the Association ever received, any federal money for grants or contracts. All of the Association's activities and services are accomplished completely free of any federal funding.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, the Non Commissioned Officers Association of the USA (NCOA) is pleased to have the opportunity to testify at this oversight hearing on the National Cemetery System and Arlington National Cemetery. The Association is grateful for the attention that this Subcommittee has given to this important area. Your continued interest and support is greatly appreciated and, in NCOA's view, seriously needed. The Association trusts that our testimony will be helpful in the fulfillment of your oversight responsibilities.

It is appropriate that NCOA take the opportunity afforded by this hearing to extend our sincere thanks to Chairman Terry Everett and the Subcommittee on Investigations for your examination into the procedures to authorize burial in Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). It is unfortunate that it took a firestorm of controversy to highlight the problem. Nonetheless, a useful purpose was served by identifying the need for strict statutes governing ANC burial eligibility. While the controversy that captured the Nation in 1997 and 1998 no longer commands newspaper headlines, the problem and the need for clear public policy has not gone away.

It is also appropriate for NCOA to extend our grateful appreciation to Chairman Bob Stump and the Distinguished Ranking Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Lane Evans, for introducing and gaining passage of H.R. 70, the Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act. The Association recognizes though that passage of the bill would not have been possible without the diligent work of this Subcommittee. The Association thanks you for that and NCOA is dedicated to getting the measure through the Senate. The Association is hopeful that the legislation will be enacted and signed into law this year.

Arlington National Cemetery

It is abundantly clear to everyone in the military and veteran community that the demand for interment in ANC is rapidly outstripping the cemetery's capacity unless additional land is provided. An initiative last year that would have authorized the eventual transfer of property, presently housing the Navy Annex in Arlington, to the Arlington National Cemetery was not adopted and NCOA views that outcome with regret.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members, NCOA asks that you recognize two other important factors relating to Arlington National Cemetery. First, the Cemetery can only be expanded; we will never be able to create another veteran's cemetery that would embody the history and nobility of the existing cemetery. Secondly, the opportunities for expansion of Arlington National Cemetery are severely limited. If the opportunity to lay claim to the land now occupied by the Navy Annex is missed, Congress will have missed a great opportunity to enhance the future and extend the life of the Nation's preeminent veterans' cemetery. When the Navy Annex buildings come down, the land will be used for some purpose. Considering that no other options exist for expansion of Arlington National Cemetery, NCOA knows of no greater or more enduring use than the conveyance of that land to the Cemetery. Mr. Chairman, the continued support of this Subcommittee on the ANC land conveyance issue remains essential.

National Cemetery Administration

In addition to the challenges pertaining to Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cemetery Administration is also confronted with its greatest historical challenge in the coming years. Even with the activation of the four national veteran's cemeteries that are scheduled within the next fifteen months, the system is not adequate to meet the needs of those World War II veterans desiring burial in a national veterans cemetery.

But burial space is only one of the challenges at hand for the National Cemetery Administration. The immediate problem, at least in NCOA's view, is VA's lack of a plan that articulates any long-term vision for national cemeteries. Beyond those currently planned, VA does not have a vision. That fact concerns this Association Mr. Chairman because NCOA believes that the National Cemetery Administration needs to develop a properly funded long-term plan that will accommodate future burial requirements: a plan that includes new cemeteries in the national system complimented by the State Veterans Cemetery Grant Program.

The Association understands that sufficient appropriations has been the principal barrier restricting expansion of existing cemeteries and creating new national veteran's cemeteries. Notwithstanding that barrier, it appears to NCOA that VA's vision for burial space for veterans is focused only on State Veterans Cemeteries. While NCOA appreciates the recent change in the grant funding for starting and equipping new state veteran's cemeteries, this Association does not look upon the state program as a replacement for the national system.

It almost appears to NCOA, that VA has adopted a "wait and see" position regarding new national veterans cemeteries and that simply is not good enough Mr. Chairman. From conception to activation, a new national cemetery can take ten to twelve years. Even if an effort was started today to try to meet the needs of WWII veterans desiring burial in a national cemetery, we couldn't do it. A vision that is tied to and plans only through the annual budgetary process, as is currently the case, is short sighted in NCOA's opinion. The Association asks that you examine this issue closely Mr. Chairman, not only in terms of costs, but also in terms of the moral principle this Nation should have toward its veterans.

And finally Mr. Chairman, by VA's own estimates, the backlog of cemetery equipment in need of replacement is nearly $8 million. As this Association has been advocating for many years Mr. Chairman, this is area of VA's budget that needs and deserves attention. The equipment and maintenance backlog could easily be retired with one lump sum appropriation. Unfortunately, VA's budgets for the past several years have only hinted at the size of the problem and offered little to correct the situation. NCOA suggests that this is an area of appropriate oversight and investigation by this Subcommittee. It is a problem and ignoring it, as VA seems wont to do, will not make it go away.

CONCLUSION

The noncommissioned and petty officers of NCOA salute the Distinguished Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee for the important work that you do. Your thoughtful consideration of our testimony is genuinely appreciated also.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF
THE RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

on

National Cemeteries, State Veterans Cemeteries
and
Arlington National Cemetery

before the

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
House Veterans' Affairs Committee

May 20, 1999

Presented by

Colonel Robert F. Norton, USA (Ret.)
Deputy Director of Government Relations
The Retired Officers Association

Biography of **Robert F. Norton, COL, USA (Ret.)**
Deputy Director, Government Relations
The Retired Officers Association

Colonel Norton is responsible in the TROA national office for legislative matters concerning veterans' health care and benefits.

A native New Yorker, Colonel Norton was born in Brooklyn and raised on Long Island. Following graduation from college in 1966, Colonel Norton enlisted in the U.S. Army as a private, completed officer candidate school, and was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry in August 1967. He served a tour in South Vietnam (1968-1969) as a civil affairs platoon leader supporting the 196th Infantry Brigade in I Corps. He transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve in 1969 and pursued a teaching career at the secondary school level. He joined the 356th Civil Affairs Brigade (USAR), Bronx, NY and served in various staff positions in the unit from 1972-1978.

Colonel Norton volunteered to return to active duty in 1978 and was among the first group of USAR officers to affiliate with the "active Guard and Reserve" (AGR) program on full-time active duty. He specialized in improving the readiness and manning of the Army's reserve forces. Assignments included the Army Staff office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel; USAR advisor to the Asst. Secretary of the Army (Manpower & Reserve Affairs); and personnel policy and plans officer for the Chief, Army Reserve.

While assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), Colonel Norton was responsible for implementing the Reserve Montgomery GI Bill. He served as the senior military assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs from 1989-1994. During his tour in Reserve Affairs, more than 250,000 National Guard and Reserve component troops were mobilized for the Persian Gulf War. Colonel Norton completed his career as special assistant to the Principal Deputy Asst. Secretary of Defense, Special Operations / Low Intensity Conflict and retired in 1995.

Colonel Norton joined Analytic Services, Inc. (ANSER), Arlington, VA in 1995 as a senior planner. He joined TROA's National Headquarters as Deputy Director of Government Relations in March 1997.

Colonel Norton holds a B.A. in philosophy from Niagara University (1966) and a Master of Science (Education) from Canisius College, Buffalo (1971). He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the U.S. Army War College, and Harvard University's Senior Officials in National Security course at the Kennedy School of Government.

Colonel Norton's military awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Vietnam Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Army Staff Identification Badge and Office of the Secretary of Defense Identification Badge.

Colonel Norton is married to the former Colleen Krebs. The Nortons have two grown children and reside in Derwood, Maryland.

INTRODUCTION

The Retired Officers Association (TROA) is very grateful to the Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for the opportunity to express our views on National Cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, and the State Veterans Cemeteries.

TROA is the fourth largest military veterans organization with nearly 400,000 members. Our membership consists of veterans and survivors who are retired officers, active duty and National Guard / reserve officers of the seven uniformed services and their surviving spouses. The average age of our officer members is 66. Overall, there are 1.67 million military retired veterans. The average age of all military retirees is 61. Many, like the great generation of World War II heroes, are in their seventies and eighties.

As a founding member of The Military Coalition (TMC), TROA works closely with the 29 other veterans and military organizations in The Coalition, which represents the collective interests of over 5 million current and former members of the seven uniformed services, plus their families and survivors. TMC's Committee structure includes a Veterans' Committee which works veterans issues for The Coalition. This Statement, however, represents the views of TROA alone. TROA does not receive any grants or contracts from the federal government.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FUNDING

The VA's Budget submission for the National Cemetery System (NCS) for FY 2000 is $97 million, an increase of only $5 million over FY 1999. Most of the increase pays for new hires. There are essentially no new funds for planning, expansion, and land acquisition. When the four new national cemeteries (Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Dallas / Ft. Worth National Cemetery, Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, and Saratoga National Cemetery) become fully operational, there's nothing in the budget to begin the needed expansion of the system for the "demographic imperative" that will occur over the next 10 years and beyond.

In addition to operating the national cemeteries, the NCS administers state veterans cemetery grants. Grants are used to establish, expand, or improve state veterans cemeteries. In the last few years TROA has testified before the full Committee that the Association was concerned over the Department of Veterans Affairs intention with regard to the state grants program. We provisionally supported the VA's proposed increase in state grant authority from 50% to 100% only if there were adequate assurances that the VA would not walk away from its commitment to the national cemeteries. The budget

proposed for the NCS appears to us to be the first step back from the VA's commitment to the national cemeteries.

Successive years of restrained budgets have made it impossible to address long-term operational and field management needs of the NCS. Veteran deaths are projected to increase from 572 thousand in 2000 to over 620 thousand in 2008. Clearly, additional funds are needed to begin the planning process for expanding existing national cemeteries and developing new ones, including areas of the country with fast growing veteran populations like the South and South West. Locations that merit early consideration include Miami, Atlanta, Sacramento, St. Louis, Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Albuquerque / Santa Fe.

The Retired Officers Association recommends the Subcommittee direct the VA to develop and submit a strategic plan for expanding the NCS with a report date of 31 December 1999. Additionally, TROA urges the Subcommittee to endorse the Veterans Independent Budget estimate of $105 million for the NCS for FY 2000 as an essential first step towards expanding the NCS.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY ISSUES

The Retired Officers Association deeply appreciates the leadership shown by Chairman Bob Stump (R-AZ) in re-introducing legislation to establish in law the eligibility rules for burial in the nation's most hallowed resting place, Arlington National Cemetery. The Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act (H.R. 70) passed the full House on March 23, 1999 and was referred to the Senate.

H.R. 70 is designed to make sure only qualified veterans are buried in the cemetery created specifically for that purpose. It codifies existing Army regulations and eliminates automatic eligibility for members of Congress, cabinet members and ambassadors who don't otherwise meet the military requirements for burial. Close family members could be buried without waivers in the plots of eligible veterans under the legislation.

Codification of the rules is necessary to assure veterans and the public that the limited remaining space available at Arlington will be used for the burial of veterans who meet the criteria. It will also eliminate confusion and uncertainty over eligibility and provide a set of standards for all to see.

Extension of Arlington Cemetery's capacity is another matter of concern for TROA and millions of veterans across the country. Unless steps are taken in the next few years, Arlington Cemetery will exhaust interment capacity by about the year 2015. Acquisition of contiguous federal land should be a priority of the Subcommittee and Congress. We

understand that there are at least 45 acres of federal land adjoining Arlington that would extend capacity until about the year 2040.

The Retired Officers Association commends the Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and the full Committee on Veterans Affairs for its leadership in steering passage of The Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act through the House. TROA urges the members of the Committee to work with the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee to ensure final passage of this important legislation. TROA also recommends early action be taken to transfer contiguous federal land to Arlington National Cemetery to extend its capacity well into the 21st century.

TROA is appreciative of the Subcommittee's commitment to America's veterans including military retirees and we look forward to working with the Subcommittee to improve and expand the National Cemetery System and Arlington National Cemetery.

STATEMENT BY

RAYMOND G. BOLAND

SECRETARY

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 MAY 1999

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and to comment on national and state veterans' cemeteries.

The State of Wisconsin is served by a combination of national and state veterans' cemeteries. In recent years we have developed state cemetery construction projects under both 50% and 100% federal funding guidelines. We have also experienced the closure of the Wood National Cemetery in Milwaukee due to reaching full capacity. It is from this range of experience that I offer my comments today.

I believe strongly that the National Cemetery System must continue to add new facilities near large population centers and seek the budgetary support needed to carry out its mission. I also believe that the State Cemetery Grant Program is an appropriate compliment to the National Cemetery System by providing coverage in geographic areas that national cemeteries do not and likely will not ever reach. We recognized this in Wisconsin six years ago when we were confronted with the projected closure of Wood National Cemetery in Milwaukee. In consulting with USDVA staff, I learned that a new national cemetery project was approved for the Chicago area, the biggest population center in our region. The cemetery in Milwaukee could not be expanded due to its restricted urban location. A new location for it would have to compete with the Chicago project for funding. We were in a scenario where a state cemetery project seemed to make sense. So, we faced the same dilemma that exists throughout the country. Do we sit back and watch the national cemetery close, hoping something else would happen, or do we take the initiative to make sure our veterans have a proper burial facility? We chose the latter.

We established the goal of having a new facility ready by the time Wood Cemetery closed. We had three years to get it done. I'm happy to tell you that we had the first interment at our new state cemetery on exactly the same day of the last interment at Wood, September 30, 1996. There was no interruption of service to our veterans and

families. We were able to accomplish this through the partnership we built with the USDVA. Their assistance, experience, and commitment to our common goal made it all possible. Our Governor Tommy Thompson and the state legislature gave us the funding support we requested and our state engineers made it a fast track project. We continue to receive donations from veterans and citizens at large for enhancements to the project. The quality of this project is as good or better than any national cemetery. The facility is something Wisconsin citizens are very proud of.

We will begin construction of another facility this Fall under the 100% funding authorization. It is sited in a rural area in northwestern Wisconsin and is smaller in size and scope than the project in the south. We also have a cemetery in central Wisconsin at our state Veterans Home. The western side of our state is served by the national cemetery across the Minnesota border at Minneapolis. Through the joint effort we share with the National Cemetery System, we now have a strategic plan that provides veterans' burial facilities within 75 miles of 90% of our population. I think our experience demonstrates how federal and state government can work together to provide the hallowed ground that our veterans have earned.

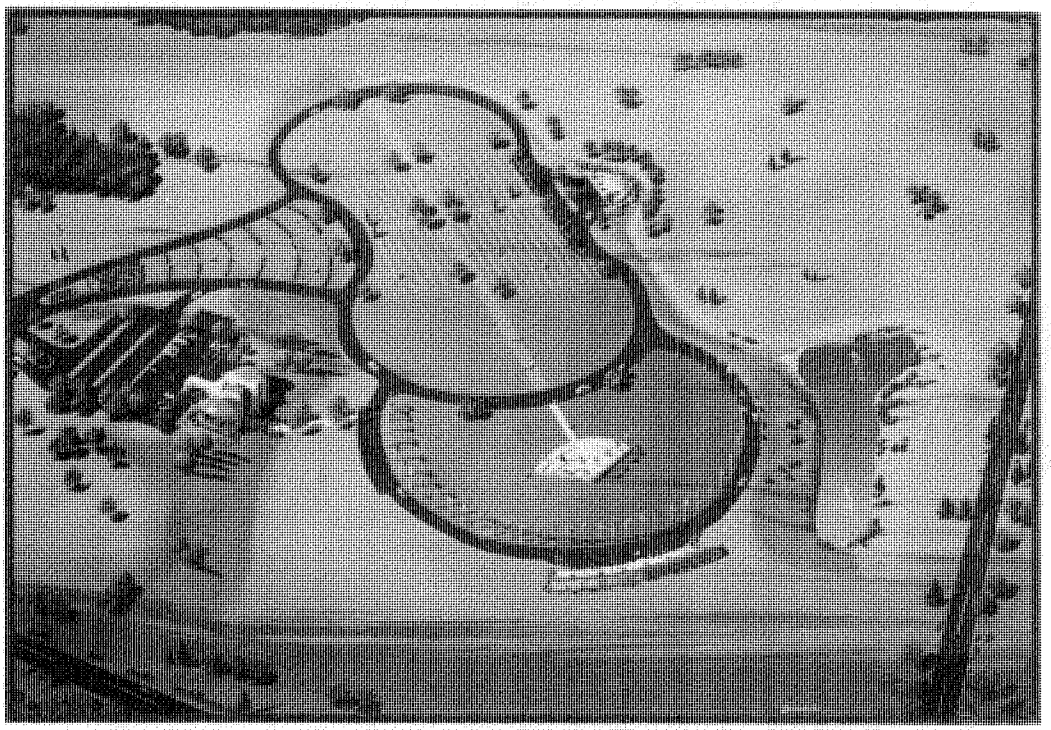
But, funding issues related to both national and state cemeteries present a number of major concerns. Obviously, construction costs are only part of the picture. Operational costs and perpetual care represent a long term challenge. From a construction standpoint I think 100% federal funding is better than 50%. We estimate the difference to be worth about ten years of our operating costs. But, what happens after that? If we are going to continue as a successful partnership, the sharing of operational costs must be addressed. The standardization of policy for burial plot allowance to cover all veterans is a legislative step that should be taken immediately. This would help us a lot.

I do expect that 100% federal funding for construction alone will create a significant increase in grant applications from the states and I fear the potential in the near term for a situation similar to the State Home Construction Grant Program. During the last ten years the states have become a major partner in providing long-term care for veterans at the very time when the aging of our veterans' population is at an all time high. Because of this nationwide response and inadequate federal budgeting we now have more than a $200 million backlog of unfunded applications. The states have been placed in the position of competing with each other for funding to provide health care for America's veterans. Might we also be required to compete for annual ranking of projects to determine which veterans will have burial facilities? By the way, the State Home Construction Grant Program requires 35% state matching funds and the states currently have funds committed on the majority of the backlogged projects.

The total picture suggests to me that most states are willing and able to be partners in serving America's veterans. I see the 100% federal funding of state veterans cemeteries as a positive step toward our mutual goal.

Once again I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery



The new cemetery will feature a committal chapel & administration building (far left), memorial plaza, outdoor committal shelter, and columbarium wall for cremation urns.

Overview:

To provide veterans and their families in southern Wisconsin with a final resting place that acknowledges and honors their achievements and sacrifices on behalf of our nation, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has opened the Southern Wisconsin Veterans' Memorial Cemetery near Union Grove, in Racine County. It replaces the Wood National VA Cemetery in Milwaukee, which has stopped accepting casket burials.

Situated on state-owned farmland at the Southern Wisconsin Center, the 105-acre cemetery site encompasses gently rolling hills with serene, natural beauty. Cemetery architects have called it "an ideal site."

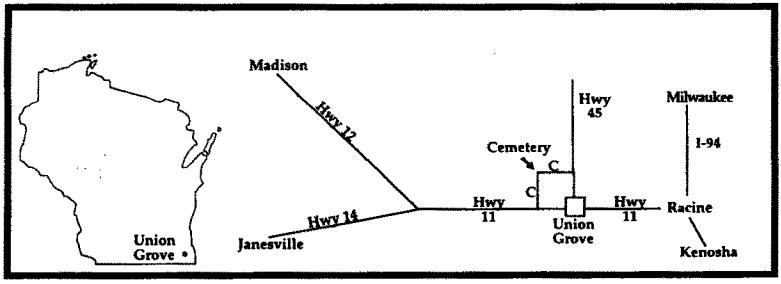
As a lasting tribute to those who served in the armed forces, the new cemetery will remind future generations that veterans were instrumental in preserving our nation's freedom.

The cemetery is conveniently located (see map) and easily accessible from metropolitan Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha. The cemetery is designed to serve the needs of 350,000 veterans who reside in southern Wisconsin, the state's most populous region. Forty percent of all Wisconsin veterans live within 50 miles of Union Grove and 50% live within 75 miles.

The cemetery is expected to inter about 650 veterans and family members annually. It has the capacity to meet burial demand for 60 or more years. The cemetery has the capability to bury caskets now and will accept cremation urns for placement in a temporary entombment structure. The urns will be moved to a permanent burial garden or a columbarium wall when construction is completed in 1997.

Construction of the cemetery is being financed by $1.24 million from the state and approximately $1.96 million in a VA matching grant. The Wisconsin Army National Guard has contributed engineering work valued at about $220,000. The total cost of cemetery construction is about $3.45 million.

Major highways leading to Union Grove



Eligibility for interment:

Veterans whose military service and state residency fulfill the following requirements are eligible.

Military service:

* Veteran was discharged or released from active duty service under honorable conditions, OR
* Veteran served at least 20 years in the National Guard or Reserves and qualified for retirement pay (or would have qualified for retirement pay except death occurred before age 60), OR
* Veteran died while on active duty.

Residency:

* The veteran was a Wisconsin resident at the time of entry into military service, OR
* The veteran entered military service from another state but was a Wisconsin resident at the time of death, OR
* The veteran entered military service from another state but was a Wisconsin resident at some point for at least five consecutive years after discharge from active duty.

The following family members of eligible veterans are also eligible, in most cases.

* Spouses.
* Unremarried surviving spouses.
* Dependent children.

Fees:

The next-of-kin of an eligible veteran will be assessed no fees by the cemetery for the gravesite, an engraved headstone or marker, the opening and closing or perpetual care.

A fee of $250 will be assessed for the interment of spouses, unremarried surviving spouses and dependent children of eligible veterans. *(There is no fee charged if the spouse or unremarried surviving spouse was a member of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King at the time of death.)*

The cemetery will assess the funeral director a charge for the cost of a grave liner or columbarium niche.

Timeline for development:

- June 1, 1996 — Construction began.
- September 30, 1996 — First interment.
- February 1997 — Begin construction of chapel/administration building.
- November 1997 — Dedication of cemetery.

Donations:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will match dollar-for-dollar any donation of money or in-kind materials from veterans' groups, other organizations and individuals received before the completion of construction in late 1997. Donations may be earmarked for a specific item (listed below). General donations are also encouraged. All contributions will be acknowledged in an appropriate manner.

Donations are needed for:

- Flags for the committal chapel, outdoor committal shelter, avenue of flags.
- Flag poles.
- Grave location information kiosk.
- Entrance gate.
- Ceremonial area plaza.
- Outdoor committal shelter.
- Landscape features such as trees, shrubs and paths.
- Reflecting pond.
- Accessories for the committal chapel/administration building, such as skylights, bay windows and artwork.
- The cemetery will also need ongoing volunteer support for activities such as color guards, landscape maintenance, decorating of graves, etc. While not eligible for matching funds from the VA, this volunteer participation will be critical to the success of the cemetery.

For more information about donations please contact Marian Lewandowski, Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, at (414) 878-5660. If you are interested in donating, please send a check to: WDVA Cemetery Fund, 30 W. Mifflin St., Madison, WI 53707-7843.

Advanced planning: ****** There is no fee or obligation ******

Veterans may make arrangements in advance for burial at the new cemetery. For more information about advanced registration for burial, call (414) 878-5660 or complete and return the attached form to: S. WI. Veterans Memorial Cemetery, 21731 Spring St., Union Grove, WI 53182.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

WDVA B0136 (11/96)
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STATEMENT
OF
CHARLES F. SMITH FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ON
OVERSIGHT OF NATIONAL CEMETERIES AND
GRANTS FOR STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 1999

***

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss issues related to the National Cemetery System and the federal grants to established State Veterans Cemeteries. Before discussing the National Cemeteries and State Grants Program, I would like to describe the benefits furnish by the State of North Carolina briefly.

The Division of Veterans Affairs is organized into the Assistant Secretary's Office located in Raleigh; fifteen district offices strategic located throughout the State; the State Service Office which is located with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; we operate three (3) State Veterans Cemeteries (located in Jacksonville near Camp Lejuene, Spring Lake near Fort Bragg and Black Mountain near Asheville); and a one hundred fifty bed State Veterans Nursing Home in Fayetteville, North Carolina near the VA Medical Center. The North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs was created by a unanimous vote of the 1945 General Assembly. The function of the Division is to assist veterans and their families in the presentation, processing, proof and establishments of claims, privileges, rights and benefits they may be entitled to under Federal, State and local laws. The Division also

cooperates with various governmental units, and veterans organizations in seeking to serve veterans.

The benefits provided by the agency include a State Scholarship Program for Children of Deceased and Disabled Wartime Veterans. Since 1945 the agency has awarded more the 16,000 scholarships to North Carolina Colleges and Universities. The budget of this scholarship program is approximately 4.3 million dollars per year.

Our district service offices are staffed by two (2) veterans service officers together with their clerical staff. They are highly trained, full time career personnel. They provide direct assistance to veterans and their dependents and coordinate activities in affiliated county veterans service offices in their districts. Nearly all of North Carolina's 100 counties have county veterans service officers. These officers are selected by their representative board of county commissioners and hold office at the pleasure of that board.

The State of North Carolina operates 3 (three) State Veterans Cemeteries which were approved by the General Assembly in 1991. The cemeteries in Jacksonville and Black Mountain began operations in late 1993. The third facility, on property provided by the United States Army at Fort Bragg located in Spring Lake, began operations in July 1997. From October 6, 1993 to December 31, 1998, the 3 (three) cemeteries have provided interment to 1,445 veterans and 249 dependents. Thus far this year the 3 (three) cemeteries have provided 207 interments, 38 of those being dependents. The cemetery in Black Mountain consist of 43 acres, Jacksonville is 50 acres and Spring Lake is 54 acres.

The annual appropriated budget for the 3 (three) cemeteries is $511,383. We received receipts in the form of plot or interment allowance from the United State Department of Veterans Affairs in 1998 of $54,750. This amount represents payment for the burial of 281 veterans from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. There are a number of veterans for which we do not receive the plot or interment allowance.

We provided burial for 403 veterans and received payments for 281 veterans. We buried 87 dependents and received payments for 84.

We provide burial for veterans who served during a period of wars as well as during peacetime service. The plot or interment allowance received from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs is provided only for veterans who served during a wartime period. The plot or interment allowance is not paid to the State Veterans Cemeteries in the case of the veteran who dies of a service-connected disability. In the case of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability, there is a $1,500 burial allowance that is paid to the funeral home or to the person who paid for the veterans burial and no plot or interment allowance is provided. Therefore, when we buried 403 veterans, we received payment for only 281 veterans.

The above information is provided to illustrate that the major expense of the State Veterans Cemetery Program is the operational expenses. The cost of construction for the cemeteries was approximately 1.2 millions dollars per cemetery, of which the Federal Government paid about approximately $750,000 for each of the 3 (three) cemeteries. Since 1993, when we began operating the cemeteries, the bulk of the expense has been borne by the State to provide interment for veterans. The equipment and personnel cost continues to increase each year.

The State of North Carolina is proud to provide services to veterans, we have a very large military contingent in North Carolina. There are currently more than 700,000 veterans residing in the State of North Carolina and there are 8 (eight) military installations with nearly 120,000 active duty personnel stationed at these facilities. North Carolina is a great place to live and work. A number of military personnel retiring or being discharged are finding employment and are residing in North Carolina. Our veterans population continues to grow.

The provisions of the 1998 statute to provide 100% construction and equipment funds to help states establish State Veterans Cemeteries is a great asset, but I ask that consideration be given to providing some operational funds to a states currently operating State Veterans Cemeteries and those planning State Veterans Cemeteries. The bulk of the operation will still be borne by the states, but it will certainly motivate other states to take advantage of the funding offered to construct new State Veterans Cemeteries.

I have worked with the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs for 27 years. Twenty-seven years ago, there were 4 (four) operational national cemeteries in North Carolina. Since that time 3 (three) of those cemeteries have closed, because they are now full. There is one operational National Cemetery in North Carolina. It is located in Salisbury, North Carolina. If arrangements are not made to expand that cemetery, it will close at the end of this year or early next year. Salisbury is strategically located in the piedmont of North Carolina between the Charlotte, area and the Winston-Salem-Greensboro areas. This National Cemetery serves in excess of 180,000 veterans living within a 50 mile radius.

A number of county and city cemeteries provide free burial plots to veterans. The interment fee for the burial generally runs from $400 to $800. Another way of assisting veterans to be located near their family members is to increase the plot or interment allowance. The plot or interment allowance has not been increased since its inception. An increase in the plot or interment allowance would not be a great expense to the Federal Government, but would be a great help to the State Cemeteries and to those counties and cities that provide free space for the interments of veterans. The North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Affairs Commission of North Carolina will continue to provide adequate services to veterans located in North Carolina. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain funding. Any assistance that can be provided in the way of increasing the plot or interment allowance or providing a per diem to the state cemeteries will enhance the program and actually reduce the cost of the

National Cemetery System. It's expensive to build a National Cemetery and maintain them.

The 100% funding, provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, to construct State Veterans Cemeteries is a very good initiative, but to provide some operational funds for these cemeteries is most important. Once markers are installed the work becomes much more labor intensive and additional equipment is needed to adequately maintain the grounds of the cemeteries. We continue to try to find ways to reduce the labor cost at our cemeteries, while continuing to provide adequate support for interment of veterans. We are now using prison labor at two (2) of our cemeteries. We have also hired temporary employees. We have also been able to obtain help from the veterans organization on volunteer basis and from the families of some of the veterans interred at our cemeteries. It is a challenge to work within the our budget but so far we have been able to meet that challenge.

Conclusion

Today, as in the past, the cost of providing interments for veterans is expensive. Providing 100% financing for the construction of new State Cemeteries and providing the equipment for those cemeteries is an excellent way to provide services to veterans. The committee does need to look at other issues regarding the operational expenses incurred by the cemeteries that are established and will be established in the future. I am proud of what North Carolina has done to provide for the interment of veterans. Our State Cemetery Program is operating very efficiently. More assistance from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs in the form of per diem or an increase in the plot or interment allowance would greatly enhance the services that we provide to veterans and their families. Again, let me say that I appreciate the opportunity to discuss these important issues with you, and I will be pleased to try and answer any questions that you might have. Thank You.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

TESTIMONY OF
ROBIN L. HIGGINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

MAY 20, 1999

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Distinguished Guests:

Thank you for allowing me to appear before this Committee as you address these important issues. I represent a state with over 1.7 million veterans, the second largest veterans' population in the country. Florida also has the oldest veterans' population and one of the largest remaining populations of World War II veterans. Interment in a final resting place that reflects the honor with which they served their country is a matter of considerable priority to them and to me.

Our vision of a model National Cemetery is, of course, Arlington National Cemetery. It is peaceful, hallowed ground in the midst of urban congestion. We can travel only a few minutes from this very room, leave all the noise and disruptions of the Beltway behind us, and find ourselves in a place of honor for our fellow patriots and heroes, a place that is suitable for quiet reflection.

Just last week I visited the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell. I am pleased to tell you that it is magnificent. In fact, because of the hard work and dedication of Director Ron Pemberton and his staff, the Florida National Cemetery won the Robert W. Carey Quality Award last year as the best of the 115 National Cemeteries. This is not only a hard-earned achievement for the staff and management, but one of which Florida's veterans can be very proud.

Certainly, Florida doesn't face some of the maintenance challenges that the northern states face with respect to weather. However, the Florida National Cemetery has set an example in sound management of its resources and in partnering with state and local government entities to enhance appearance while reducing costs. For example, the Florida National Cemetery recently entered into a partnership with the State of Florida and the Southwest Florida Water Management District to establish a 2-million gallon retention pond to use reclaimed water from the state for irrigation. The project results in saving millions of gallons of water from the Florida aquifer and helps to keep the lawns at the Cemetery looking beautiful.

In my estimation, perhaps the most important maintenance issue facing us in Florida relates to the VA's plan for our increased future needs. It is obvious that as more and more veterans are buried each year, it will take additional funds to maintain the higher numbers of grave sites properly. The Florida National Cemetery has seen incredible increases in burial activity since it opened in 1988. That year, it took in 288 casketed burials and 169 cremation burials. In contrast, last year they had 2,855 casketed burials and 2,278 cremation burials – an increase of over 1,000 percent in just 10 years! It is currently the third most active National Cemetery in the entire system. And increases of nine percent

annually are projected between now and 2008. I am concerned that the VA's long-term plan for maintenance may not adequately address our future needs.

As a responsible American, I am aware of the need to spend our tax dollars wisely. However, I can assure you that our veterans' Cemeteries are not the place to settle for a minimal level of care. The value to Americans everywhere and to the families of our fallen soldiers in particular, makes the investment in our National Cemeteries worthwhile. Honoring veterans whose service has guaranteed our way of life sets a critically needed example for our children as well.

Mr. Chairman, I urge this Committee to endorse adequate funding for the upkeep of our National Cemeteries -- now and in the outyears -- and to insist that those funds are managed properly and efficiently, thereby ensuring that our National Cemeteries remain a source of pride and dignity for all Americans.

Since we have broached the subject of future National Cemeteries and maintenance costs, please permit me to address a particular need of the veterans of my home state of Florida.

As I mentioned earlier, Florida has the oldest veterans' population of any state. Yet we have only one other National Cemetery besides Florida National Cemetery accepting casketed remains. Bay Pines National Cemetery in St. Petersburg only accepts cremated remains for initial interment. And St. Augustine National Cemetery is only 1.4 acres in size, and while a very nice historical site, it is essentially closed. None of these cemeteries is closer than 250 miles to the largest segment of our oldest, densest, and fastest growing population of veterans -- south Florida. In fact, in studies conducted by the VA in 1987 and again in 1994, south Florida was listed both times as a priority for a National Cemetery in terms of need. But, one has yet to be built.

The current veterans' population of just six of the counties in South Florida (Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Monroe, Collier and Lee) which would be served by the new cemetery totals over 470,000. As pointed out by Congresswoman Corrine Brown when she introduced HR 1628, we expect nearly 25,000 veteran deaths in southeast Florida in FY 2000 alone, with this number increasing every year to the year 2010.

Mr. Chairman, we must bury these veterans with the honor they deserve, close enough to their homes and their families so that they will not be forgotten. I am told that, sadly, a number of deceased veterans' remains make the 5-hour trip from south Florida to the Florida National Cemetery each month; all too often, unaccompanied by any family at all because of the long distance.

South Florida is long overdue for a National Cemetery, and it is fundamentally wrong for us to delay its construction until the time when it just doesn't matter anymore. As Congresswoman Brown so eloquently stated, "The time for evaluating the needs of southern Florida is long past and the time for action is rapidly slipping away." I pledge to work with any member of this committee and each member of the Florida delegation to see that we bring a new National Veterans' Cemetery in south Florida into reality. On behalf of the 1.7 million veterans in Florida, many of whom have grown up and lived in other states all over the Nation before coming to Florida to live out their remaining years, I humbly ask for your help.

We have been asked to participate in the VA's State Cemetery Grants Program to alleviate our need. While Florida supported the original construction of the Florida National Cemetery by donating 400 acres from the Withlacoochee State Forest, and is currently in the process of donating an additional 170 acres for its needed expansion, we have some serious misgivings with the State Cemetery Grants Program as it currently exists.

The current program provides start-up costs to build a cemetery on donated state land, but provides no assistance for operations and maintenance. The VA is asking Florida to commit to an endless future liability, with no promise of future assistance. Governor Bush has taken the position, and rightfully so, that he will not ask our State Legislature to commit our state to this annual expenditure in perpetuity.

This is not to say that Florida completely rejects the concept of a State Veterans' Cemetery; we do not. Governor Bush is willing to consider supporting legislation to complement the National Cemetery program with a State Cemetery, but only after we have a commitment by the VA for a National Cemetery in south Florida and for ongoing assistance in the operations and maintenance of a State Veterans' Cemetery.

Mr. Chairman, we do not ask the VA to fund the entire cost of the operations and maintenance of a State Veterans' Cemetery; that would remove all incentive for the VA from the State Cemetery Grants Program. However, I would invite comparison to the State Veterans Nursing Home program. By contrast, that program provides 65% of the initial construction costs, plus a per diem payment that defrays some, but not all, of the costs of daily care. Florida has wholeheartedly embraced this program with two operating State Veterans' Nursing Homes, another beginning construction this summer, and two more planned.

A State Veterans' Cemetery program that more nearly paralleled the Nursing Home program would be far more palatable for the Florida Legislature and the taxpayers they represent. The Governor has pledged his consideration of support to such a program.

Winston Churchill is attributed with once saying that a nation that does not honor its heroes will soon have no heroes to honor. Mr. Chairman, it is absolutely essential to the character and the core values of this country that we continue to honor our heroes. Every man and woman who place themselves in harm's way for this country deserves the recognition that accrues from this sacrifice. They are the heroes among us. They deserve the honor and recognition of a decent burial in a hallowed place. They deserve a vibrant National Cemetery System.

Mr. Chairman, I request your indulgence for a moment of personal reflection. My husband, Colonel Rich Higgins, who died at the hands of terrorists while serving his country, is buried at Quantico National Cemetery, just down I-95. I visit him every chance I get. Words cannot express how important it is to me that he is at rest on American soil in a place of dignity and peace. The value of seeing his grave site, and others around him, kept to such a high standard cannot be measured in mere dollars. I would be heartbroken and feel that Rich's sacrifice for his country was diminished if I went there and found anything less.

I urge this panel to do whatever it takes to ensure that every American hero, past, present and future is secure in the promise that they will be laid to rest in the arms of a grateful Nation.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. Again, please permit me to extend my appreciation for your attention. I would be glad to entertain your questions.

STATEMENT OF MR. BRIAN E. BURKE, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (CIVIL WORKS)

MR. CHAIRMAN AND DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

INTRODUCTION

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee, on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, in support of Arlington National Cemetery. Arlington National Cemetery is the Nation's premier military cemetery. Well known edifices and historic sites include the Tomb of the Unknowns, the old and new Memorial Amphitheaters, the Columbarium, the graves of Presidents Kennedy and Taft, and the Visitors Center. It is an honor for me to represent the cemetery. With me today is Mr. John C. Metzler, Jr., Superintendent of Arlington National Cemetery.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

Management of Arlington National Cemetery presents challenges unique among the Nation's national and military cemeteries. Not only is Arlington National Cemetery a heavily visited shrine honoring the past service of the men and women of our Armed Forces, it continues to serve as an active burial place for today's military men and women. Since the funeral of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, Arlington National Cemetery has become a major Washington area tourist attraction. During Fiscal Year 1998, Arlington National Cemetery accommodated approximately 4 million visitors, making Arlington National Cemetery one of the most visited historic sites in the National Capital Region.

In Fiscal Year 1998, there were 3,604 interments and 2,034 inurnments. In Fiscal Year 1999, we estimate there will be 3,600 interments and 2,100 inurnments, and in Fiscal Year 2000, we estimate there will be 3,700 interments and 2,150 inurnments.

During the same year, about 2,700 ceremonies were conducted at Arlington National Cemetery. Thousands of visitors, both foreign and American, visit Arlington National Cemetery to participate in a variety of events, ranging from a simple wreath laying ceremony to Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies attended by the President of the United States.

To sustain our ability to carry out the cemetery's mission into the future, several broad planning efforts are necessary. Last year, the Master Plan for the cemetery was updated, and the President's budget for Fiscal Year 2000 proposes funding to begin both a ten-year capital investment plan and an automation plan. The Master Plan will be the overall guide as we take steps to address rehabilitation and construction required at the cemetery.

1998 MASTER PLAN

The Army has recently completed a Master Plan for Arlington National Cemetery, which identifies projects and policies to respond to the challenges confronting Arlington National Cemetery.

The Master Plan challenges include:

- an aging infrastructure
- declining availability of space for initial interment, and
- the need to preserve the dignity of the cemetery while accommodating substantial public visitation.

This plan has identified fourteen parcels of land that potentially could be used to expand the cemetery, which would allow it to remain open for initial burials well into the 21st century. All of the parcels are either currently contiguous to the cemetery or would become contiguous after currently adjacent parcels are acquired.

Conceptual planning is required to determine when the contiguous lands might be available in the future. Toward that end, $500,000 was included in the Fiscal Year 1999 budget to prepare concept utilization plans to develop contiguous lands owned by the Federal Government as they become excess to the needs of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. The President's Budget for Fiscal Years 2000-2003 includes funds to continue preparation of concept land utilization plans to develop those parcels continuing the President's goal of ensuring the availability of land for initial burials.

Projects and policies must be measured against funding to be made available in the budget and appropriations processes. Detailed planning and engineering studies necessary to establish the cost, feasibility, and responsiveness of individual capital projects to the Master Plan challenges will be programmed and proposed to Congress at the appropriate times, consistent with the overall program and budget of the President.

FISCAL YEAR 2000 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Secretary of the Army is responsible for the operation of Arlington and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemeteries. The President's budget for Cemeterial Expenses, Army for Fiscal Year 2000 is $12,473,000, an increase of $807,000 over the Fiscal Year 1999 appropriation. This increase will permit Arlington National Cemetery to improve its infrastructure and work toward implementation of the cemetery's Master Plan. The funds requested are sufficient to support the work force, to assure adequate maintenance of the buildings, to acquire necessary supplies and equipment, and to provide

National Cemeteries. The budget is divided into three programs: Operation and Maintenance, Administration, and Construction.

The Fiscal Year 2000 Operation and Maintenance budget of $10,133,000 will provide for the daily operations necessary to allow an average of 20 interments/inurnments daily, for the support of a great many non-funeral ceremonial events, and for maintenance of the nearly 628 acres of land. Recurring costs and normal repairs to facilities and grounds are funded in the Operation and Maintenance program. The budget includes $200,000 to develop a comprehensive automation plan for the cemetery. When implemented, the automation plan will facilitate internal communications and operations. Moreover, we envision such improved services to visitors as automated gravesite locators.

The Fiscal Year 2000 Administration program budgeted at $928,000 will finance the essential management and supervision responsibilities of Arlington and Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemeteries.

Major repairs, renovations and new facility construction, as well as certain studies and other activities not previously funded, make up the Construction program, budgeted at $1,412,000 for Fiscal Year 2000. The distinction between Operation and Maintenance and construction activities is generally made on the basis of project scope and whether or not it is of a recurring nature. The construction program fluctuates the most over time as activities are initiated and completed. This program includes $150,000 to develop a ten-year capital investment plan for financing capital investments in the most technically and financially efficient manner.

Ongoing construction projects include:

- $60,000 to continue preparation of concept utilization plans for developing contiguous lands,
- $165,000 to perform minor road repairs throughout the cemetery,
- $60,000 to install a heating and air-conditioning system in a bay at the new facility maintenance complex, and
- $335,000 to continue the graveliner program.

FORMULATION OF THE CEMETERY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

In formulating the annual program for the cemetery, we carefully balance the immediate maintenance needs of the cemeteries' buildings, roads and grounds against the need to begin to take more ambitious actions aimed at meeting the cemeteries' long-term needs. At least twice each year, the Superintendent reviews the maintenance plan for the cemeteries with his staff to determine whether maintenance priorities should be adjusted, in the light of unanticipated needs for repairs.

In addition to the maintenance of graves and niches containing the remains of more than 266,000 persons, we must maintain over 18 miles of roadways and walkways on the cemeteries' 628 acres and a number of historic sites located throughout the cemeteries.

Contractual services are a critical part of the Operations and Maintenance program. In recent years, significant savings have been achieved through contractual services. For example, past contracts for custodial services cost about $210,000. However, competition resulted in a much lower bidder receiving this contract, leading to significant savings in Fiscal Year 1998 and 1999. This contractor has demonstrated, during the busiest season at Arlington National Cemetery, his ability to adequately perform the required custodial service. Over recent years, the cemetery has gradually transferred from full-time in-house staff to contractors many duties that are well defined and repetitive in nature. These changes have allowed the cemetery to retrain and use Federal employees to perform functions not readily amenable to being contracted out.

The Fiscal Year 2000 budget includes $300,000 to continue an expansion of contracts for enhancing the appearance of the cemetery, while reducing the overall cost and number of government employees as part of government-wide streamlining. Contracting the recurring labor intensive, cyclical, seasonal work has been successful in the local competitive bidding climate. Through streamlining and contracting, Full Time Employee Equivalents have been reduced from 140 in Fiscal Year 1992 to 102 in Fiscal Year 1999. Additional work has been accomplished that could not be performed previously and the level of quality has been acceptable. We continue to refine the scopes of work associated with contracts to enhance the level of quality of the work performed as intended by the Government Performance and Results Act.

For Fiscal Year 2000, the total contractual services is estimated to be $4,267,000. This includes:

- $1.755 million for grounds maintenance,
- $840,000 for information guide services,
- $698,000 for tree and shrub maintenance,
- $110,000 for custodial services and,
- $864,000 for regular recurring maintenance items, such as headstone cleaning and realignment, maintenance of the eternal flame and many other minor contracts.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks. The Superintendent and I will be pleased to respond to questions from the Subcommittee.

STATEMENT OF ROGER R. RAPP

**ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR MEMORIAL AFFAIRS,
NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**FOR PRESENTATION BEFORE
THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**

MAY 20, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to share with you our perspective on important issues pertaining to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA).

I appreciate the interest you have shown in support of NCA's mission to provide veterans with an honorable final resting-place and to maintain our national cemeteries as national shrines. These are goals that I have supported during my entire tenure with NCA, and which all employees throughout NCA have embraced. I will continue to be an advocate for this noble mission.

Since the establishment of the National Cemetery System by the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-43), and its subsequent name change to the National Cemetery Administration with the passage of the Veterans' Benefits Enhancement Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-368), NCA has actively worked to expand the number of burial sites and provide a wider range of burial options for our Nation's veterans and their eligible dependent family members. Significant NCA accomplishments in expanding service delivery over the years include:

- The opening of thirteen new national cemeteries for burials including, Calverton National Cemetery and Riverside National Cemetery in 1978; Massachusetts National Cemetery in 1980; Fort Custer National Cemetery and Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in 1982; Quantico National Cemetery in 1983; Fort Richardson National Cemetery in 1984; Fort Mitchell National Cemetery in 1987; Florida National Cemetery and West Virginia National Cemetery in 1988; the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in 1989; San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery in 1992; and Tahoma National Cemetery in 1997.

- An increase of 9,382 acres (220 percent) in system capacity by opening new national cemeteries and expanding existing cemeteries from a total of 4,260 acres in 1973 to 13,642 acres in 1999.

- Developing additional capabilities for the interment of cremated remains to respond to changing burial preferences of veterans, including the expanded use of columbaria.

- The establishment of a partnership with the States to increase service delivery for veterans through the State Cemetery Grants Program.

Strategic Planning Within NCA

NCA strongly supports the development of strategic plans to fulfill the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). We also volunteered, and were selected, as a GPRA pilot organization. The NCA strategic plan was developed through an inclusive planning process. NCA continues to refine and enhance its strategic plan, and a revised strategic plan was developed for the period of 1998-2003. NCA has devolved the strategic planning process to the cemetery level with the development of cemetery business plans at all cemeteries. Plans linked by common goals and outcomes are based on identified requirements and reflect expectations of veterans, their family members, and other stakeholders.

Our strategic planning process gives full consideration to veteran demographic data. During the next decade, we face the challenge of providing for a rapidly aging veteran population. Based on the 1990 census, annual veteran deaths are expected to increase nine percent from 550,000 in 1998 to 601,000 in 2003. Annual veteran deaths are expected to peak at 620,000 in 2008. As the number of veteran deaths rises, we are projecting increases in the number of annual interments from 76,700 in 1998 to 110,000 in 2008. During this time, the total number of graves maintained is projected to increase from 2.3 million in 1998 to 3.0 million in 2008.

To meet the burial needs of veterans, NCA has established a goal to increase service delivery by providing reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery within 75 miles of the veterans residence. In Fiscal Year 1998, 68.6 percent of veterans were served by a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery. The goal is to increase the percentage of veterans served to 77.1 percent by Fiscal Year 2000, and to 80 percent by Fiscal Year 2004.

We are working to achieve this goal by completing the construction of new national cemeteries, extending the service life of existing national cemeteries, and working in partnership with the States to establish state veterans cemeteries through the State Cemetery Grants Program. In addition to completing the construction of four new national cemeteries, more than 20 expansion projects will be completed and additional land acquired at 12 existing national cemeteries over the next two years. Also, seven new state veterans cemeteries are scheduled to open over the next two years and will provide service to over 357,000 veterans not currently served.

New Cemetery Construction

The findings in two reports to Congress, one completed in 1987 and a follow-up completed in 1994, have been, and will continue to be, the basis for planning new national cemeteries. Each report identified the ten geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest based on concentrations of the veteran population. The listings, however, do not commit VA to build national

cemeteries in each location, nor do they rank the order in which they may, if chosen, be built.

By the turn of the century, six new national cemeteries will be operational from the 1987 and 1994 Reports to Congress. San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery in California opened in 1992 and Tahoma National Cemetery, near Seattle, opened in 1997. The construction of four additional national cemeteries is currently underway to serve veterans: Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery near Chicago, Illinois; Saratoga National Cemetery near Albany, New York; Dallas/Fort Worth National Cemetery in Texas; and the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery near Cleveland, Ohio.

After these four new cemeteries open, VA will continue to evaluate the potential establishment of additional new national cemeteries in the remaining geographic areas identified in the two reports, within the framework of the Department's strategic planning and budgeting processes. The seven areas identified as being in greatest need from the combined listings of the 1987 and 1994 reports still remaining are, in alphabetical order: Atlanta, Georgia; Detroit, Michigan; Miami, Florida; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Sacramento, California; and St. Louis, Missouri. I am pleased to report that we have made progress in the St. Louis metropolitan area, which is currently served by Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. When the 1994 congressional report was issued, Jefferson Barracks was projected to deplete its inventory of gravesites in 2002. Subsequent to the 1994 report, and addressing the continued need for St. Louis, additional land has been acquired to extend the service period of the cemetery to 2010, and $7.5 million was included in the Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations bill to develop this additional land. In addition, we are following the intent of Congress by working to award a contract to develop a master plan and design documents for a potential cemetery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Partnership with the States

NCA prides itself on developing a continued partnership with the states to provide burial services for our Nation's veterans. The State Cemetery Grants Program is a true complement to, not a replacement for, our federal system of national cemeteries. Through this grants program, service can be provided to veterans residing in less densely populated areas not currently served by a national cemetery. Since 1980, the Department has awarded 128 grants totaling more than $58 million to the states. Twenty-one states now operate 38 cemeteries. These facilities provided the honor of burial in a state veterans cemetery to more than 12,000 veterans and their eligible family members in Fiscal Year 1998.

With the passage of Public Law 105-368 last year, we have been able to strengthen our partnership and increase burial service to veterans. This legislation revised the funding formula for the State Cemetery Grants Program by authorizing the Federal Government to pay up to 100 percent of the costs of construction associated with establishment, expansion or improvement of a state veterans cemetery. In addition, VA can now provide grant funding for the initial equipment costs in establishing new state veterans cemeteries. This legislative change has improved the ability of states to obtain Federal funds for establishing complete and fully equipped cemeteries for

veterans. As before, the states remain totally responsible for operations and maintenance, including additional equipment needs.

The new law has resulted in an increased interest by the states, which will eventually increase service delivery in areas that are not currently served. In addition to the 38 cemeteries now operated by 21 states, we awarded grants for development of three new cemeteries in two additional states in Fiscal Year 1998. We have approved pre-applications for grants to establish 10 new cemeteries in five more states. Once all those cemeteries are operational, there will be 51 state veterans cemeteries in 28 states.

Several states are considering legislation to establish one or more cemeteries. Kansas has approved legislation to establish a system of up to four state cemeteries. Kentucky, Colorado, Arizona, and Louisiana also are in the process of obtaining appropriate state-level approvals for the development of new state veterans cemeteries.

Maintaining National Cemeteries

A major challenge facing NCA is to ensure that all national cemeteries are maintained in a manner befitting their status as national shrines. These shrines must provide each veteran with a final resting-place that reflects the dignity, honor, and respect that they have earned. Regular, ongoing maintenance is required in burial sections as well as in the infrastructure of all 115 national cemeteries. In 1998, these cemeteries consisted of 2.3 million gravesites, over 6,000 developed acres (acreage no longer in its natural state), more than 400 buildings, and other infrastructure such as roads, walks, fences, boundary walls, irrigation and electrical systems, and monuments.

Maintaining the grounds, graves, and grave-markers of national cemeteries as national shrines requires our continuous attention. Cemetery maintenance issues are influenced by many different factors. As time goes by, cemeteries experience a variety of environmental changes that may require extensive maintenance. Extremes in weather, such as excessive rain or drought, can result in or exacerbate sunken graves, sunken markers, soiled markers, and inferior turf cover. For example, the 230-pound upright headstones and the 130-pound flat markers tend to settle over time and must be raised and realigned periodically. The frequency of this need varies depending on soil conditions and climate.

There are 59 historic VA national cemeteries that were developed during the Civil War era. Most of these historic sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Typically, these 130 year-old facilities have quality, yet aging and sometimes deteriorating, structures. These structures include masonry lodge buildings, stone boundary walls, stone monuments and statues, and other truly historic features such as rostrums. These are costly elements to maintain, but these are also the very features that make our historic cemeteries national shrines.

The increasing number of interments performed at national cemeteries also presents maintenance issues. As a result of the rapidly increasing mortality of World War II and Korean War veterans, and a higher utilization of burial services among

Vietnam era veterans, annual interments have increased from 58,400 in 1989 to 76,700 in 1998, and will continue to increase over the next decade. It has been necessary to redirect some NCA maintenance resources to interment operations in order to meet the annual interment workload increases. This increasing burial workload has a compounding effect on NCA maintenance requirements. Improvement projects for some longstanding maintenance issues at our older cemeteries have been deferred as available maintenance resources have been focused on preventing additional significant maintenance problems from developing.

Cemetery Appearance Standards

A key objective of the NCA performance plan is to ensure that the appearance of national cemeteries is rated excellent by veterans, their family members, and the general public. NCA is performing surveys of the families of individuals who are interred in national cemeteries, and of other visitors, to measure how the public perceives the appearance of the cemeteries. The information obtained is an excellent yardstick by which to assess maintenance conditions at individual facilities as well as the overall system. Typically, most organizations set goals and report on levels of satisfaction by combining the "excellent" and "good" scores received from survey respondents. However, in NCA, we have raised the bar consistent with the high standards and expectations of veterans and the general public. Excellence can be the only standard for the appearance of a national shrine, and that is the standard by which we will measure the effectiveness of our stewardship.

During Fiscal Year 1998, 77 percent of survey respondents rated the appearance of national cemeteries as excellent. NCA's strategic goal is to have 100 percent of survey respondents rate the appearance of its national cemeteries as excellent by 2003. While we are pleased that more than three-quarters of survey respondents believe the appearance of our national cemeteries is excellent, we need to do better to close the gap between our goal and our actual performance. To meet this strategic goal will be a challenge, especially in active cemeteries where burials are still being performed, and the data collected from surveys will be an important tool to ensure that NCA maintenance resources address those issues most important to those we serve.

Efficiencies Through Contracting

The primary activities at our national cemeteries related to performing interments are usually accomplished by VA employees. However, we consider contracting opportunities when determining how best to increase our efficiencies in meeting the maintenance needs of our cemeteries. Currently, all maintenance activities at 30 national cemeteries are conducted exclusively by contractors. In addition, 26 soldiers lots, plots, and monument sites under the jurisdiction of NCA are maintained through a contractual arrangement. Where feasible, individual national cemeteries use contractor services for a variety of activities. Several areas that are routinely contracted include: pest management, headstone and marker cleaning, tree trimming, general housekeeping, all second inscriptions and all minor construction projects. We have had

varied success with contracting out activities; we are pleased with the results in many locations, but where we have not been satisfied with the results we have brought the activities back in-house to be performed by VA employees.

A major contracting success has been the establishment of a partnership with the Veterans Health Administration's Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program. This One VA initiative supports therapeutic work opportunities for veterans and provides our national cemeteries with a cost-effective labor source that is used to assist in cemetery maintenance activities. Since the beginning of this initiative in 1993 at one cemetery, local partnerships have been established at more than 20 locations and the total number of CWT participants working in national cemeteries has increased from four to more than 100. This is one of our greatest success stories—NCA and VHA working together to serve veterans.

We are planning to use contractors to perform maintenance activities at the four new cemeteries currently under construction. In addition, all grounds maintenance activities are being performed by contractors at the new Tahoma National Cemetery. A major advantage to this approach at new cemeteries is that there would be no adverse impact on an existing cemetery workforce, which is predominantly comprised of veterans. We are very proud of the fact that veterans represent 69 percent of our workforce, which is, we believe, the highest percentage of any government agency. As of March 31, 1999, NCA employs 906 veterans out of a total of 1,331 employees.

We are also expanding our use of performance based contracts. Rather than establishing maintenance contracts which set specific requirements on how to do the job, performance based contracting is focused on the results to be achieved by the contractor. This new approach to contracting is consistent with getting the results we want, that is, a national cemetery that is maintained as a national shrine.

Reducing Future Maintenance Requirements

We are continuously reengineering work processes and looking for new operational methods that can reduce ground maintenance requirements. Thanks to the legislation Congress passed in 1988 (Public Law 100-322), the use of graveliners was authorized in open national cemeteries, which has greatly reduced the amount of time and resources that must be spent on maintaining graves. When graveliners are not used, the earth around caskets compacts, which results in sinkage of the gravesite and the need to fill the grave, reestablish turf, and possibly raise and realign the headstone. We now use graveliners to dramatically reduce cemetery maintenance requirements. In addition, we are expanding the use of pre-placed crypts to reduce our future maintenance workload, which also has the added benefit of streamlining the actual interment process.

We are also working to reduce future maintenance problems caused by the lack of adequate irrigation systems. For example, the feasibility of an irrigation project is being evaluated to provide a solution to turf problems experienced at Quantico National Cemetery. Also, all new national cemeteries currently under construction will have modern irrigation systems in place. Irrigation, drainage and utility requirements are

major investments in our larger national cemeteries. Developing a long-term, cost effective water source will provide the infrastructure within national cemeteries necessary to reduce maintenance costs and improve cemetery appearance. We are committed to consider providing state of the art irrigation systems at all of our larger national cemeteries, taking into consideration the environmental and water source issues that need to be addressed when evaluating a project.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or the members of the Subcommittee may have on these important issues.

STATEMENT OF

SIDNEY DANIELS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WITH RESPECT TO

NATIONAL AND STATE CEMETERIES &
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1999

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

On behalf of the men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this most important hearing to present our views on veterans cemeteries managed and operated by both federal and state authorities.

First, I would like to offer comments on the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), which manages and operates the largest system of veteran cemeteries. The VFW believes that expansion of NCA over the next ten years will be crucial to meeting the burial demands that will be placed on this system, as the veteran population ages. NCA projects that interments will peak to approximately 107,000 in the year 2008. However, there is no strategic plan beyond the year 2000.

The increased demand for burial space comes at a time when space is at a premium. Of the 115 national cemeteries, 57 are open to all interments, 33 are open only to cremated remains, and the remaining 25 are closed to new interments. This year four new national cemeteries are scheduled to open for burial in the following areas: Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas; Saratoga, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; and Chicago, Illinois. While this is certainly progress, it should be noted that there is no plan to address the burial needs of several other major population centers such as Atlanta, Georgia; Miami, Florida; or Sacramento, California. The NCA must thoroughly give appropriate attention to the needs of veterans in these and other cities.

The rapidly aging veteran population as a whole and the accelerating death rate of World War II veterans has also complicated the challenges facing NCA. The veteran death r[illegible] is expected to

increase by 25% through the year 2005. Yet, during this same period, the interment rate is expected to increase by 40%. Although we applaud the staff's ability at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to perform the vital mission of NCA despite budgetary shortfalls and the increased workload associated with new cemetery activation, the agency's staffing needs has become more critical as the interment rates increase. All of these circumstances necessitate additional funding and personnel. Accordingly, the VFW recommends that Congress fund NCA at a level of $106 million for FY 2000 to offset the higher costs of administrative expenses due to the increased workload. This figure also includes provisions for 80 additional full-time employee equivalents (FTEEs) to offset the reduction in employees since 1997.

Over the years, NCA has struggled to maintain the appearance of its 115 national cemeteries. Successive years of restrained budgets have also made it virtually impossible to address long-term operational and management needs. This has forced the system to address only the highest priority projects while foregoing important preventative maintenance and infrastructure repairs.

Mr. Chairman, since 1980, the VA has provided over $57 million in grants for the establishment, expansion, and improvement of approximately 40 state-run veteran cemeteries. In 1998, Public Law 95-476 authorized NCA to administer the State Cemetery Grants Program, through which states receive financial assistance to provide burial space for veterans and eligible dependents. State Veterans Cemeteries are operated and permanently maintained by the states. Additionally, Public Law 105-368 now allows states to receive 100% funding from the VA to establish a State Veterans Cemetery. This new, fully funded grant program should encourage states to establish cemeteries to meet the needs of the aging veteran population and the rising interment rate. Therefore, we recommend that Congress appropriate $10 million in FY 2000 to ensure that approved state cemetery grant applications will be funded.

Mr. Chairman, Arlington National Cemetery is one of the Nation's most revered shrines. Since its beginning in 1864, Arlington has functioned not only as a military burial ground but also as the site of major memorial events and ceremonies. There is an average of 5,000 funerals and more than 4 million visitors per year. The cemetery consists of 612 acres with more that 250,000 gravesites.

Although Arlington is funded as an independent agency and administered by the Department of the Army, its importance as a national shrine and its symbolic value to the veteran's community cannot be overlooked. When proposed future land acquisitions be implemented, Arlington should be able to remain an open cemetery for casket burials until at least the year 2035 and accept cremated remains for an indeterminate period. We recognize the professionalism and hard work of the Arlington National Cemetery staff.

Despite its constrained resources, the cemetery has served well the needs of the veteran community and has fulfilled its ceremonial and public mission as one of the Nation's most important shrines. However, high maintenance standards expected at the cemetery require increased funding to deal with an aging and deteriorating infrastructure. We contend that its $12 million operating budget is not sufficient to reflect the true needs of one of the most visited and important cemeteries in the world. We, therefore, recommend Congress add $5 million to the budget for Arlington National Cemetery to ensure critical grounds maintenance is met.

Also, given the day-to-day operational, ceremonial, and diplomatic demands and responsibilities of the Superintendent's position at Arlington, the VFW believes this position merits inclusion at the Senior Executive Service level instead of the current General Schedule Series Grade-15.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement and I will be happy to address any questions.

WRITTEN COMMITTEE QUESTIONS AND THEIR RESPONSES

CHAIRMAN EVERETT TO RAYMOND G. BOLAND, SECRETARY, WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

1. Please provide the subcommittee with a breakdown, and an explanation if necessary, of the operational costs for each of Wisconsin's state veterans cemeteries.

Southern Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery Costs

Salaries	$179,100
Fringe Benefits	74,700
Limited Term Employees	40,000
Supplies/Services	71,200
Capital Equipment	57,100
TOTAL	**$422,100**

Northern Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery Costs

First Year of Operation	**(10 months)**	**Equivalent Annual Costs**
Salaries	$89,800	$107,700
Fringe Benefits	38,100	45,246
Limited Term Employees	29,300	29,300
Supplies/Services	87,300	87,300
Capital Equipment	30,200	30,200
TOTAL	**$274,700**	**$299,746**

2. Please submit an approximate amount of the operational costs, for each cemetery, the State of Wisconsin would transfer to the federal government, if permitted. Please explain why the operations expenses should become a federal payment, rather than remaining a state responsibility.

We believe that standardization of burial plot allowance and increasing its monetary amount would be a very helpful step for us in meeting the operational costs of our cemeteries. Operational costs should be shared by the state and federal government on a 50% basis. Operational costs shared by 50% formula would cost $360,923 to the federal government. Operational costs provided 100% by the federal government would be $721,846. Based upon current and projected annual interments, a 50% formula would equate to a plot allowance of approximately $500.00 per veteran.

Chairman Everett to Charles F. Smith, Assistant Secretary for Veterans Affairs, North Carolina Department of Administration, Division of Veterans Affairs

Answers submitted for the record by
Mr. Charles F. Smith

1. Please provide the subcommittee with a breakdown, and an explanation if necessary, of the operational costs for each of North Carolina's state veterans cemeteries.

Answer: The State of North Carolina operates three (3) State Veterans Cemeteries. The budget for the cemeteries is not separated by individual facilities. The total operational cost of all three (3) cemeteries is as follows:

Personnel Services	$421,868
Purchased Services	48,756
Supplies	18,391
Property & Equipment	17,903
Other Misc. Expenses	465
Total Expenditures	$507,383

2. Please submit an approximate amount of the operational costs, for each cemetery, the state of North Carolina would transfer to the federal government, if permitted. Please explain why the operations expenses should become a federal payment, rather than remaining a state responsibility.

Answer: The operational expenses that the state could transfer to the federal government, if permitted, are not actually shown in question #1. Our cemeteries are about six (6) years old and some of the equipment is in need of replacement and that cost could be shared by the federal government.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CIVIL WORKS
108 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0108

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Honorable Terry Everett
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your letter of May 26, 1999, enclosing Subcommittee questions to which you requested answers be provided for the permanent record of the hearing on May 20,1999.

Enclosed with this letter are the questions and answers, provided in the format requested in your letter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your Subcommittee on behalf of the Honorable Louis Caldera, the Secretary of the Army, on maintenance of Arlington National Cemetery.

Sincerely,

Brian Eliot Burke
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

Enclosure

Questions for the Record Submitted by Chairman Everett

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY ROADS

Question. How many miles of roads are in the Arlington National Cemetery? Are the roads in good repair? How often do you do major repairs to the roads?

Answer. There are approximately 18 miles of roadway, with curbing, at Arlington National Cemetery. Currently about 20% of the roadways are in need of major repair. Our roadways are heavily used and need continuous maintenance to be able to maintain them at a level consistent with our nation's most sacred burial grounds. Minor road resurfacing is performed almost every year, at an estimated annual cost of $500,000. However, major road repair, which goes down to the base level and deals with drainage, is very expensive. These repairs must be fit into the overall construction budget which includes other large-dollar projects such as constructing new columbarium, restoring large structures such as the Memorial Amphitheater, and building new structures like the new Facility Maintenance Complex. Over the last ten year period about $4 million has been applied to major repairs to the roads.

ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING

Question. If additional construction amounts were made available how would it be used? Which construction projects would be funded?

Answer. If additional funding became available in the construction program it would be used, depending on the amount made available to: (1) further study the repairs required at the Kennedy gravesites and the interior of the reception building at the Memorial Amphitheater, which are the first priorities to be pursued in the capital investment plan; (2) construct a vehicle storage building at the Facility Maintenance Complex to protect the equipment from the elements; and (3) undertake major road repairs in the most heavily used areas.

ADDITIONAL OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Question. If additional money were made available for your Operations and Management program how would it be used?

Answer. If additional money were made available in the Operation and Maintenance program, it would be used to repair more flagstone walkways and perform more minor road re-surfacing. Additional headstones would be re-aligned, additional tree maintenance would be performed and the scope of work for the ground maintenance contract would be expanded to include tamping of gravesites within one week and top dressing of new gravesites more quickly after each interment.

CONCEPT LAND UTILIZATION PLANS

Question. Does Arlington have any plans for expanding the cemetery? What are those plans? Which land parcels are anticipated to become available in the future?

Answer. The 1998 Master Plan addressed challenges facing the cemetery, including the need to expand in order to remain open for new burials well into the 21st Century. Of the expansion possibilities discussed in the Master Plan, four are being addressed in the concept land utilization plan, as follows: (1) the property known as the Navy Annex/Federal Office Building (FOB) 2, up to 42 acres; (2) a collection of multiple properties west and north of the Lee Mansion

consisting of "Section 29", currently owned by the National Park Service, the old Arlington National Cemetery warehouse area, and adjacent Fort Myer property, currently used as a picnic area, on the other side of the existing Arlington National Cemetery boundary wall, approximately 31 acres; (3) the property known as Henderson Hall, 22 acres;and (4) the area on Fort Myer between their new chapel and the old chapel, a majority of which is now paved parking areas and tennis courts, and is bounded on the east by the existing wall of Arlington National Cemetery and on the west by McNair Road, 15 acres. This is a total of 106 acres. Please note that these acreages are the most recent, realistic estimates and may differ from numbers noted in the past.

All of the land currently under study is owned by the Federal Government, and part or all of it could eventually become available as the land becomes excess to the needs of the current users.

There is no preferred or prioritized list for the potential properties at this time; however, one of the deliverables for the current concept land utilization plan is to recommend a timetable and methodology for orderly development of the parcels.

In addition to the above, the level of effort undertaken in the study of these four parcels will include: a) examination of parcel boundaries and ownership based on existing maps, b) layout of road, walks, utility easements, and burial areas, c) study of acreage within each parcel and calculation of the gravesite yield or identification of potential columbarium areas and calculation of the number of niches available and the resulting number of additional years of initial interments and inumments, d) study of the impact on existing utilities in regard to removal or re-location to maximize the amount of land available for interments, e) identification of the required demolition of existing facilities and any hazardous substances in buildings or stored on site and the remediation measures required, f) identification of the retention, relocation, or rebuilding of any affected facilities within each parcel to support mission requirements, g) identification of all actions required for transfer and development of the parcels, and h) assessment of the time required to develop each parcel, based on development of each parcel as one single project.

For each of the study items identified, preliminary programming budget cost estimates will be developed for each parcel and will be independent for each parcel which will allow for development of whichever of the parcels become available. Further detailed designs will be required to develop budget-quality construction cost estimates, as well as cultural resource plans and/or environmental assessments for each parcel.

RECURRING MAINTENANCE

Question. What type of maintenance work do you define as "recurring" and therefore a candidate for contracting?

Answer. The grounds maintenance, tree and shrub maintenance, and headstone re-alignment work is generally major, regularly recurring work that is done by contractors. This repetitive work is done outside, seasonally and does not require specialized skills.

In addition, there are many minor recurring maintenance tasks that are performed by contractors primarily because, although they require personnel with specialized skills, the skills are required only occasionally, such as maintenance of the eternal flame by the gas company, or maintenance of the elevators, indoor tropical plant maintenance, etc. Work that would be a candidate for contracting would be that which is not managerial, is repetitive in nature, and is within the definition in Administration publications such as Office of Management and Budget Circulars of the type of work that lends itself to contracting.

There is some work that can be performed better and at less cost by the contractor because of its close association with a purchased product. For example it costs much less for a contractor who is providing grave liners to also install them as they are delivered than it would be to maintain in-house staff to move and install the grave liners.

SAVINGS IN MAINTENANCE WORK

Question. What do you estimate has been the total savings to the Treasury in transferring some maintenance work from the federal workforce to contractors?

Answer. The transfer of the grounds maintenance work from the federal workforce to contractors began at Arlington National Cemetery in the 1970s. An estimate of the savings is difficult because more work is now performed by contractors than was previously performed by the federal workforce at that time, we estimate that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been saved in this area alone. Contractors bring to bear a large low skilled labor force necessary during the busiest seasons and spread out the fixed costs of using those resources to more than one location throughout the metropolitan area, taking advantage of economies of scale for personnel and equipment. Headstone re-alignment work can be accomplished as required at various times of the year when the weather permits by saturating an area with contracted personnel at lower cost than it would require to maintain Government personnel for that repetitive work throughout the year. The care of trees and shrubs is also seasonal, and of this work is outside, repetitive work. Because these activities are being perfomed by contractors, the amount paid for workman's compensation, retirement benefits, standard Federal Employee benefits, administrative overhead, and equipment repair and replacement continues to decrease for Arlington.

NON-RECURRING PROJECTS NEEDED AT ARLINGTON

Question. What are the non-recurring, one-time fix-ups needed at Arlington? What is the cost of these repairs?

Answer. Most of the non-recurring or, at least, irregular major maintenance and construction items needed at Arlington National Cemetery are outlined in the recently completed Master Plan. Examples are major utility repairs, heating and ventilation and air-conditioning upgrades in buildings, a new visitors main entrance off of Route 110, memorial restorations (U.S.S. Maine and Spanish American War memorials), boundary channel pump-house closure, water meter installation, etc. The Fiscal Year 2000 budget includes funds to develop an initial ten-year capitalization plan that builds upon the work begun in the Master Plan to prioritize future capital projects. Notwithstanding this, work is proceeding on non-recurring maintenance items. For example, $420,000 is included in the FY 2000 budget for the service complex, to address building code problems and bring the facility fully into environmental compliance. Also, the FY 2000 budget includes $60,000 for a heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system for one of the bays at the facilities maintenance complex. Although the recommendations in the Master Plan are specific, the information regarding the timing and cost of the recommended construction projects is general in nature. The cost estimates provided by the Master Plan are preliminary in nature and more detailed planning and engineering studies will be needed to establish cost, feasibility, and responsiveness of capital projects to the Master Plan challenges. Projects will be programmed and proposed to Congress after review and consideration by the Administration.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE REPAIRS

Question. In the slide presentation, we saw several examples of deferred maintenance needs. How much will it cost to repair the reception building at the Tomb of the Unknowns? How much would it cost to repair the flagstone walkways at the columbarium? How much would it cost to repair public walkways throughout Arlington, including the one seen in the slides leading up to the Tomb of the Unknowns?

Answer. The repair of the flagstone walkways at the columbarium is estimated to cost $65,000. The determination of the costs to repair the interior of the reception building at the Memorial Amphitheater and the public walkways throughout Arlington National Cemetery will require, first, detailed study and, second, design efforts. We are, however, making other major investments in walkway safety. One of the most heavily used public walkways at Arlington National Cemetery is the Custis Walkway, initially constructed in 1879 along the route of General Robert E. Lee's departure from the Custis Mansion at the beginning of the Civil War. Reconstruction of the 2,500-foot-long walkway is underway, in order to protect public safety by addressing significant heaving and cracking problems and to restore aesthetic features along the historic walkway.

Questions for the Record Submitted by Congresswoman Brown

KENNEDY GRAVESITE REPAIRS

Question. I am concerned with the repair and maintenance needs at the Kennedy Memorial Gravesite. At the House Veterans' Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on May 20, 1999, Superintendent Metzler testified that before any repairs could be done, a study would be needed to fully assess the extent of the work required. Mr. Metzler said that such a study was not scheduled for two years.

a. What priority does the Kennedy Gravesite study have and when will funding for the study be requested?
b. What is the estimated cost of such a study and follow-up design plan?
c. What is the projected schedule for repair of the Kennedy gravesites and when will those repairs be completed?

Answer.

a. The Arlington National Cemetery Superintendent and senior and technical staff have spent considerable time in preparing for the Kennedy Gravesite study. Priorities for the study and major repair areas have been identified through FY 1999. The study itself is among the highest priorities to be pursued in the Capital Investment Plan, which is funded in FY 2000. If funds become available during FY 2000, we expect to fund this plan in accordance with the priorities established under the Capital Investment Plan. One of the products of the Kennedy Gravesite and other capital plans will be to determine when and how much to request Congress to fund in annual appropriations for the various needed capital investments.

b. The current estimated cost of the Kennedy Gravesite study is $300,000; the cost estimate for the follow-on design would be determined as part of the study.

c. The projected scope of work, project cost, schedule and milestones for the repairs of the Kennedy gravesite will be determined in the study and design. In the short run, this work will compete with funding for developing additional gravesite space in Project 90, building additional Columbarium courts at the Columbarium complex, and other maintenance projects.

COLUMBARIUM WALKWAY

Question. I am also concerned with the dangerous state of repair in which the Arlington columbarium walkway was shown in the hearing's opening slide presentation.

a. What is the estimated cost of repairing the flagstone walkways at the columbarium?
b. When will these repairs be completed?

Answer. The estimated cost of repairs to the flagstone in the first court of the Columbarium complex shown in the hearing's opening slide presentation is $65,000. The repairs are being addressed this year within available funds.

GRAVE LINERS AND PRE-PLACE CRYPTS

Question. The VA uses grave liners and is expanding its use of pre-place crypts.

a. Does Arlington use such systems?
b. If not, why not?
c. In your opinion, what are the pros and cons regarding these concepts?

Answer.

a. Arlington National Cemetery uses grave liners but does not use pre-place crypts.
b. We do not use pre-place crypts primarily because of the large initial installation cost, cost associated with multiple interments using the pre-place crypts, and the appearance of an assembly-line operation instead of conducting individual on site grave-side services. Further, the Superintendent has not seen a consistently successful pre-place crypt program in the VA system.

In our opinion the cost to use grave liners is offset by the reduced maintenance cost and improved appearance over time. We are watching closely the results currently surfacing from the VA's use of pre-place crypts since their use is a recent development. The alignment of headstones with the pre-place crypts is different and the change in appearance at Arlington National Cemetery might cause the public to have some concerns.

STORAGE AREAS

Question. The slide presentation at the beginning of the hearing showed open storage areas for VA heavy equipment.

a. How would you characterize the Arlington National Cemetery storage adequacy for equipment and supplies?
b. Describe what, if any, storage facilities are needed at Arlington, and their estimated costs.

Answer.

a. We have recently completed construction of a new Facility Maintenance Complex, which protects some of our heavy equipment and supplies. We are investing $420,000 in Fiscal Year 2000 to correct long term building code concerns and environmental issues at the adjacent service complex which will protect some more of our heavy equipment and supplies. The old warehouse area also is still used for some of this storage but we must get out of that area to satisfy environmental concerns and finish centralizing operations. With all of that there is still a large portion of our heavy equipment that is stored outside.
b. We need to continue to complete the Facility Maintenance Complex. This would complete the required storage of heavy equipment and supplies. The construction of a new vehicle storage area, estimated in 1995 to cost $1.3 million plus design and contracting costs, adjacent to the Facility Maintenance Complex will allow us to protect most of our heavy equipment from the elements. Another project to construct ground maintenance supply storage buildings, estimated in 1995 to cost $2.1 million plus design costs, in this area will provide needed areas to allow us to demolish the old warehouse and centralize operations where most of the initial burial operations are occurring.

FUEL STORAGE TANKS

Question. The EPA has mandated that fuel storage tanks meet specified environmental standards.

a. Do all of your fuel storage tanks meet those EPA standards?
b. If not, what are your plans and schedule for correcting this deficiency, and at what cost?

Answer.

a. Yes, all of our fuel storage tanks meet the EPA standards.
b. We are currently constructing a new wash stand/fuel island which is scheduled for completion this calendar year. This project will give us the most up to date compliance with EPA standards.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

August 13, 1999

The Honorable Terry Everett
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your May 26, 1999, letter transmitting post-hearing questions and your subsequent August 9, 1999, letter requesting a detailed explanation as to why you had not received the responses.

As indicated in my July 1, 1999, interim response, when the responses were developed, an internal and external (Office of Management and Budget) review was required. The review and refinement of the answers is a time consuming process and I apologize for the delay in getting the answers to you. The answers are enclosed for the record.

With respect to your request for an explanation regarding VA's actions in responding to the Subcommittee's follow-up questions, I have enclosed a detailed chronology which we believe best illustrates the process through which our responses were developed.

Improving the quality and timeliness of correspondence is a priority at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Department's procedures for coordinating responses to congressional correspondence are under review. Our goal is to noticeably improve timeliness and responsiveness.

If you have additional questions or comments, please have your staff contact me or Charlie Likel, Congressional Relations Officer at 202-273-5611.

Sincerely,

Sheila Clarke McCready

Enclosures
SCM/rlh

Chronology of VA's Formulation of Answers and Review Process for the 5/20/99 Post-Hearing Questions from Congressman Terry Everett

DATE	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
05/26/99	Letter from Congressman Everett	
05/26/99	Received by the Office of Congressional Affairs and the Office of the Secretary	
05/27/99	Officially entered into Electronic Data Management System	
05/27/99	Assigned to the Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) by the Office of the Secretary	
05/27/99	Assigned to the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) by OCA (Internal discussions among OCA, NCA, and Office of General Counsel (OGC) staff)	Internal assignments to divisions under NCA made on 5/28/99
06/21/99	Memo transmitted answers from NCA to OCA for review	
06/24/99	Assigned to OCA Congressional Relation's Officer and the OGC to review	Internal assignments to divisions under OGC made on 6/24/99
06/25/99	OCA returned suggested changes to NCA	
06/29/99	NCA forwarded a revised set of answers to OGC	
06/29/99	OGC reviewed and determined OMB clearance would be required and sent to OMB	
07/01/99	Interim reply sent to Congressman Everett by OCA	
07/08/99	OMB sent passback to OGC. OGC forwarded to NCA.	
07/09/99	NCA discusses OMB comments with OMB staff for clarification and agreement	
07/13/99	NCA forwards final revisions to OGC	
07/14/99	OMB cleared responses, OGC concurred and returned to OCA	
07/14/99	OCA prepared transmittal memo to the Secretary	OCA begins final internal review and clearance process
07/26/99	OCA approved and signed transmittal to the Secretary	
07/29/99	Assigned to the Office of the Secretary for final review	
08/02/99	Returned to OCA for clarification of concurrences	Clarification of outstanding issues resolved 8/13/99
08/13/99	OCA dispatched	

Post-Hearing Questions
Concerning the May 20, 1999, Hearing

for
The Department of Veterans Affairs

from
The Honorable Terry Everett
Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

1. What standards do you use to measure your maintenance performance?

The National Cemetery Administration (NCA) currently uses data gathered from customer comment cards to measure how the public perceives the appearance of the cemeteries. The comment cards cover four categories: grounds; gravesites; headstones and markers; and facilities. The data collected allows NCA to measure a key objective of its performance plan, which is to ensure that veterans, their family members, and the general public rate the appearance of national cemeteries as excellent. The information obtained is a valuable yardstick by which to assess maintenance conditions at individual facilities as well as the overall system. Typically, most organizations set goals and report on levels of satisfaction by combining the "excellent" and "good" scores received from respondents. However, in NCA, we have raised the bar consistent with the high standards and expectations of veterans and the general public. Excellence can be the only standard for the appearance of a national shrine, and that is the standard by which we will measure the effectiveness of our stewardship. During FY 1998, 77 percent of respondents rated the appearance of national cemeteries as excellent. NCA's strategic goal is to have 100 percent of respondents rate the appearance of its national cemeteries as excellent by 2003.

NCA headquarters also provides continuous guidance to the field for carrying out activities that are common at all national cemeteries. Interment procedures, maintenance and repair of buildings, turf management, and safety requirements are examples of areas that are addressed.

2. Why can't the maintenance of national cemeteries approach the standards of the American Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries overseas?

While comparisons are often made between NCA's national cemeteries and the overseas cemeteries maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), there are some major differences. Interment operations are no longer conducted at cemeteries under the jurisdiction of ABMC and its budget is dedicated exclusively to maintenance operations. Because national cemeteries administered by NCA continue to conduct interments, maintenance of burial sections in national cemeteries is much more difficult and challenging than at inactive ABMC cemeteries. For example, interments in national cemeteries often must be performed in established burial sections in all kinds of weather conditions; this requires continuous repair and renovation of those burial sections. NCA conducted about 77 thousand interments in 1998.

3. Of the 115 cemeteries in the National system, 58 were built at the end of the Civil War. What are some of the maintenance issues at these historic facilities? Have repairs been deferred at these sites?

Most of the Civil War era cemeteries have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Typically, these 130+ year-old facilities have quality, yet aging and sometimes deteriorating structures (i.e., masonry lodge buildings, stone boundary walls, stone monuments and statues, and other truly historic features such as rostrums.) Renovation, stabilization, tuck-pointing, and general maintenance often requires specialized work that must be properly specified and contracted.

There are essentially three means of accomplishing maintenance at our historic facilities: (1) Minor Construction Program, (2) Maintenance and Repair (M & R) projects funded by the NCA operating budget, or (3) work performed by cemetery staff. The latter two methods are generally geared toward recurring repairs or upkeep such as painting. However, the more significant and costly work usually is accomplished through the Minor Construction Program. These projects must compete for funding within a limited budget, and generally gravesite expansions take precedence over projects not directly resulting in burial space for veterans.

4. What would be the cost of non-recurring, one-time fix-ups needed at the National cemeteries? Provide the subcommittee a list of these maintenance needs with the associated costs.

One of the primary goals of NCA is to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines. Maintaining the structures, grounds, gravesites, and grave-markers of national cemeteries so that they are positively perceived by veterans and their families is essential to achieving this goal. The activities that are required to maintain a national cemetery must be undertaken on an ongoing basis, although the time frame may vary from two years to twenty years, depending on the activity. With the passage of time, maintenance requirements at a cemetery increase.

Recurring maintenance is accomplished either on an on-going basis by cemetery staff labor or by a Maintenance and Repair (M&R) project. This normally involves activities such as painting, re-roofing, road repair, and improvements to burial grounds. The more significant and costly maintenance of cemetery infrastructure is usually accomplished through the Minor Construction Program. Such maintenance needs are identified at the local cemetery level and submitted for inclusion in the national five-year prioritized construction plan. Current estimates for planned maintenance needs (both M&R and Minor Construction projects) are categorized as follows: (1) $15 million for improvements to burial grounds; (2) $12 million for the renovation and maintenance of historic structures; and (3) $28 million for all other infrastructure improvements, including walkways, roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems.

5. If Congress were to provide additional funding for cemetery maintenance, how much would be needed and how would VA use this funding?

As stated above, the cemetery maintenance projects (both M&R and Minor Construction) currently identified as future year needs total $15 million for improvements to burial grounds, $12 million for the renovation and maintenance of historic structures, and $28 million for all other infrastructure improvements, including walkways, roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems. If Congress were to provide this additional funding, VA would use the funds to complete the needed maintenance projects within each category.

6. If VA decided to build a cemetery in every state, how many would need to be built and how much would the design, construction and perpetual maintenance cost?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not believe it is necessary to build a national cemetery in every state to provide service to veterans. The Department's resources are currently being directed to areas of the country with the largest concentrations of unserved veterans. To meet the burial needs of veterans, VA has established a goal to increase service delivery by providing reasonable access to a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery within 75 miles of the veteran's residence. The Department is working to achieve this goal by completing the construction of four new national cemeteries. In addition, VA is committed to continue service delivery by completing more than 20 expansion projects and acquiring land at 12 existing national cemeteries over the next two years. Also, seven new state veterans cemeteries are scheduled to open over the next two years to complement VA's system of national cemeteries. There are currently only eleven states that do not have a national cemetery and, of these eleven, ten states either are constructing or have

plans to construct a state veterans cemetery. The option to build a state veterans cemetery is feasible for the remaining state, Idaho, which has neither type of cemetery.

7. Explain why it is not more economical and efficient to contract headstone cleaning at Long Island National Cemetery?

The appearance of our Nation's national cemeteries is a high priority of the families of veterans interred in a national cemetery. Customer surveys have shown that visitors and families want to see clean, not weathered, headstones and markers. In response to customers' expectations, management at Long Island National Cemetery developed and initiated a plan to clean all of the cemetery's 240,000 upright marble headstones. Currently, five cemetery employees are dedicated to this task during nine months of each year; headstones cannot be effectively cleaned during the winter months of January, February, and March. About 10,000 headstones are cleaned each month. This project, which is being accomplished with existing staff on a part-time basis, will take 2 ½ years to finish. It would be more efficient to contract out this headstone cleaning project. However, to accomplish this project in a more timely manner would require NCA to redirect additional existing resources currently dedicated to higher priority routine maintenance requirements, such as mowing and trimming the grass around headstones and markers, and other cemetery improvements.

8. Why doesn't VA have a plan for new cemeteries after 2000? Is the VA saying there is no need for new cemeteries?

VA has long range planning documents that identify the geographic areas within the United States that have the greatest number of veterans who are not served by a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery. After opening the four new national cemeteries currently under construction, VA will continue to evaluate the potential establishment of additional national cemeteries. In addition, the Department is following the intent of Congress by working to award a contract to develop a master plan and design documents for a potential veterans cemetery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. VA is also addressing the continued need in St. Louis, Missouri. Additional land has been acquired to extend the service period of the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery to 2010, and $7.5 million was included in the Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations legislation to develop this additional land.

9. In which geographic areas has VA identified the greatest need for new cemeteries? List the locations.

The remaining seven areas identified as being in greatest need from the combined listings of the 1987 and 1994 Reports to Congress are, in alphabetical order: Atlanta, Georgia; Detroit, Michigan; Miami, Florida; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Sacramento, California; and St. Louis, Missouri.

Post-Hearing Questions
Concerning the May 20, 1999, Hearing

for
The Department of Veterans Affairs

from
The Honorable Corrine Brown
Ranking Democratic Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives

1. At the House Veterans Affairs Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on May 20, 1999, witnesses were highly critical of VA's lack of strategic planning for burial space over the next ten-to-twenty years and the Departments' failure to request needed funding for national cemetery planning in the FY 2000 budget submission.

a. If VA has a long-range plan for its veterans' cemeteries, please submit that plan for the record. If it does not have such a plan, please explain why it does not.

NCA has several long-range planning documents which it uses as a basis for evaluating the burial needs of the veteran population. The findings in two reports to Congress, one completed in 1987 and a follow-up completed in 1994, have been, and will continue to be the basis for evaluating the need for new national cemeteries. NCA also just completed a longer-range plan during the summer of 1998. All three reports are attached for the record.

b. With the veteran annual death projected to peak at 620,000 in 2008, with over half of the national cemeteries closed for casket burials, and with the time required to build a new national cemetery ranging from five to ten years, why did the Administration not request any funds in its FY 2000 budget submission to even plan a new national veteran's cemetery?

As in no other time since the Civil War, NCA is seeing an unprecedented number of new cemeteries being opened this year, which will serve 2.2 million new veterans who previously have not been served with a burial option in either a national or a state veterans cemetery. NCA is also making progress on other major national cemetery projects. By FY 2000, states will open seven new state veterans cemeteries that will provide service to over 357,000 veterans not currently served. The next steps are to evaluate the feasibility for new national cemeteries in the areas of the country that remain on the lists from the 1987 and 1994 Reports to Congress.

2. List the top five geographic areas of the country most in need of veterans' burial space in the order of their need. Explain why they are so listed and when the veteran burial needs of those areas will be met.

The findings in two reports to Congress, one completed in 1987 and a follow-up completed in 1994, identify the ten geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest based on concentrations of the veteran population. Since these reports were issued, VA has opened two new national cemeteries and is completing the construction of four other new national cemeteries.

The locations below represent the remaining geographic areas that were identified in the two reports to Congress and are listed below in alphabetical order. The listings, however, do not commit VA to build national cemeteries in each location, nor do they rank the order in which they may, if chosen, be built.

Atlanta
Detroit
Fort Sill (currently in the Master Plan/Design process)
Miami
Pittsburgh
Solano County (Sacramento area)
St. Louis (additional land acquired)

If VA were required to choose five sites for new national cemeteries, the sites would be chosen from this list. Locations have never been rank ordered but those listed in the Reports to Congress were based on providing service to large veteran populations.

After the four new cemeteries which are currently being constructed are open, VA will continue to evaluate the potential establishment of additional new national cemeteries in the remaining geographic areas identified in the two reports, within the framework of the Department's strategic planning and budgeting process.

3. VA's strategic goal is to provide 80 percent of veterans with access to a burial option within 75 miles of their home.

a. Why isn't the Department's goal to provide access to all veterans? Why is VA planning NOT to provide access to 20 percent of our Nation's veterans?

The Department's long-range strategic goal is to serve 100 percent of eligible veterans with a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery. The performance target over the five-year budget planning period is to increase the percentage of veterans served by a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence to 80 percent by Fiscal Year 2004. This target would represent an 11.4 percent increase over the FY 1998 actual level of 68.6 percent.

b. How quickly could VA provide access to a burial benefit for all veterans?

In Fiscal Year 1998, VA provided 68.6 percent of veterans in the United States with a burial option in a national or state veterans cemetery within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence. It takes an average of five to seven years to build a new cemetery. NCA is currently in the process of building four new national cemeteries. This fact, coupled with the increased interest from the states in the State Cemetery Grants Program, will allow the number of veterans served by a burial option to continue to increase over the next five years.

4. I am pleased to note the increased interest in the State Cemetery Grants Program as a result of last year's legislation that raised the VA's funding authority from 50 percent to 100 percent of the cost of establishing a new state cemetery, plus equipment. My concern, however, is that the program might not be adequately funded to meet the increased demand. When the VA's FY 2000 budget request was being prepared, the new legislation had not been enacted. If there are not sufficient funds to meet all of the grant requests, what criteria will VA use to make veterans' cemetery grant awards to states?

NCA is preparing revised criteria and guidance for prioritizing pre-applications to reflect legislative changes in the grant program which authorizes the Federal Government to pay up to 100 percent of the costs of construction associated with establishment, expansion or improvement of a state veterans cemetery. The new criteria and guidance should be available within six months. Currently, the criteria and guidance for prioritizing pre-applications is contained in the *State Cemetery Grants Program Guide, PG 40-1* and is as follows:

PRIORITY I – Projects for which states have made available adequate state financial support (matching funds) so the project can proceed upon approval of the grant without the need for further action on the part of the state to make funds available.

PRIORITY II – Projects for expansion which involve the addition of gravesites needed to keep a cemetery open or projects of an emergent nature affecting the suitability of an existing site and/or the architectural, mechanical, electrical, safety or fire protection aspects of the facility.

PRIORITY III – Projects for locations identified by VA as optimal sites for additional burial space for veterans, in accordance with the report to Congress submitted under Public Law 99-576, or similar demographic studies.

PRIORITY IV – Projects from states that have not received VA grant assistance in the establishment, expansion or improvement of state-owned cemeteries for veterans.

PRIORITY V – Projects for improvement that do not involve additional gravesites or that include gravesites in advance of actual need.

PRIORITY VI – Projects from states that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines to have a greater need than other states, or projects meeting other criteria the Secretary deems appropriate.

5. A large number of states do not have state veterans' cemeteries and have not expressed any interest in applying for a VA state cemetery grant.

a. What suggestions do you have for increasing the use of the state cemetery grant program?

Approximately 21 states currently operate state veterans cemeteries, which received Federal assistance through the State Cemetery Grants Program. Several states are in the process of designing and constructing additional cemeteries. When all these projects are completed, 28 states will be operating 51 cemeteries. Additional states have passed legislation in their most recently completed sessions to establish state veterans cemeteries and a number of other states are considering cemeteries.

The recent legislation that revised the funding formula for the State Cemetery Grants Program to authorize the Federal Government to pay up to 100 percent of the costs of construction associated with establishment, expansion or improvement of a state veterans cemetery has been very successful. There has been an increased interest from the States in the program, which is reflected in the number of pre-applications received. Currently, NCA has approved pre-applications from Indiana, Massachusetts, Georgia, Kansas and Arkansas. In addition, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska have recently passed legislation to establish state veterans cemeteries and a number of other states, including Louisiana, Kentucky, Ohio, California and Texas, are considering the possibility of constructing veterans cemeteries. NCA will continue to market the States Cemetery Grants Program and provide the states with any necessary outreach and support as a way for continuing to increase the use of the program.

b. What, if any, additional incentives need to be added?

NCA defers to the States on this issue. However, measures that make it easier for Federal agencies, such as the Department of the Army, to transfer land to the states for the purposes of establishing or expanding a state veterans cemetery would facilitate the establishment of cemeteries in some cases. Currently, the process of transferring land is long and complicated.

c. In your opinion, what, if any, effect would an increase in the plot allowance and expansion of plot allowance eligibility have on states' receptivity to the veterans' cemetery grant program?

An increase in the amount of the burial plot allowance and extension to all veterans buried in a state cemetery may have a positive effect on states considering whether or not to apply for a grant. Currently, the plot or interment allowance is $150. Many states rely on the burial plot allowance as income to assist in offsetting costs associated with

operating a cemetery. There are also those states that operate state veterans cemeteries and do not have plans to build future cemeteries, for example, Maryland, which currently operates five state veterans cemeteries. These states are not able to take advantage of the recent legislation that has increased the grant amounts available through the States Cemetery Grants Program, but they would benefit from an increase to the burial plot allowance.

d. What would be the estimated cost of legislation that would (1) increase the plot allowance from $150 to $300, and (2) expand the eligibility to receive a plot allowance to all veterans eligible for burial in a national cemetery?

The estimated cost of legislation to increase the plot allowance from $150 to $300 would be $1.4 million in FY 2000. This figure is based on the projected number of 9,400 veteran interments at state veterans cemeteries that are currently eligible to receive a burial plot allowance based on their wartime service.

The estimated cost of legislation to expand the eligibility to receive a plot allowance to all veterans eligible for burial in a national cemetery at the current rate of $150 would be $180,000 for FY 2000. At the increased rate of $300 per burial plot allowance, the estimated cost would be $320,000, which is in addition to the $1.4 million estimated for currently eligible veterans noted in the above paragraph.

6. Increased workloads with straight-line budgets have caused VA to defer much needed maintenance on such things as old walls, lodges, walkways and roads.

a. What is the cost of eliminating National Cemetery Administration's current deferred maintenance backlog?

One of the primary goals of NCA is to maintain national cemeteries as national shrines. Maintaining the structures, grounds, gravesites, and grave-markers of national cemeteries so that they are positively perceived by veterans and their families is essential to achieving this goal. With the passage of time, maintenance requirements increase. For instance, some larger cemeteries may have thousands of sunken markers to deal with at any given time. Severe soil conditions, extremes in weather, excessive rain or drought can exacerbate sunken graves, sunken markers, soiled markers, and un-irrigated turf cover.

Recurring maintenance is accomplished either on an on-going basis by cemetery staff labor or by a Maintenance and Repair (M&R) project. This normally involves activities such as painting, re-roofing, road repair, and improvements to burial grounds. The more significant and costly maintenance of cemetery infrastructure is usually accomplished through the Minor Construction Program. Such maintenance needs are identified at the local cemetery level and submitted for inclusion in the national five-year prioritized construction plan. Current estimates for planned maintenance needs (both M&R and Minor Construction projects) are categorized as follows: (1) $15 million for improvements to burial grounds; (2) $12 million for the renovation and maintenance of historic structures; and (3) $28 million for all other infrastructure improvements, including walkways, roads, storage facilities, irrigation systems.

b. What is VA's plan for eliminating that backlog?

VA will continue to plan and fund operating and Minor Construction projects for accomplishing these tasks in priority order.

7. The slide presentation at the beginning of the hearing showed the need for storage facilities at some of VA's national cemeteries.

a. What is the extent of this problem throughout the system?
b. What, if any, plans does VA have to correct it?
c. What would be the estimated cost of such facilities?

The requirement for administrative, maintenance, and storage space is accomplished in concert with phased expansion of national cemeteries. There is no "backlog" of storage deficiencies throughout the system, and all identified requirements are included in the five-year planning process. All essential national cemetery equipment is properly stored in accordance with both established criteria and local climatic requirements.

8. The EPA has mandated that fuel storage tanks meet specified environmental standards.

a. Do all of the fuel storage tanks at VA national cemeteries meet the EPA standards?

Underground fuel storage tanks (USTs) were to be in compliance with EPA standards by December 22, 1998. The National Cemetery Administration has been working toward this goal for nearly ten years. All but a few of the 115 VA national cemeteries had at least one, if not more, USTs when originally developed or expanded. Currently, we have only one national cemetery, Calverton, that is operating non-compliant tanks. Three other facilities took their USTs out of service prior to December 22, 1998, and are using temporary, portable tanks until aboveground replacement tanks are installed. These four national cemeteries are currently awaiting installation of new above ground fuel tanks.

b. If not, what are the Department's plans and schedule for correcting this deficiency?

All four of these national cemeteries have programmed and funded Minor Construction Projects to accomplish the task of installing a new above ground fuel tank at each cemetery. Design work is being completed for three of the sites and construction is underway at the fourth. In some cases, the fuel tank work is being done in conjunction with other construction at the cemetery. Actual construction is expected to be completed and/or underway this fiscal year at all of these facilities.

c. What is the estimated cost of such corrective maintenance?

The removal, disposal, and replacement of USTs at these four sites will cost approximately $367,000. This corrective work involves a total of 10 fuel tanks at the four cemeteries.

9. Mr. Rapp noted the possible need for an irrigation system at Quantico National Cemetery.

a. How common is this problem throughout the system?

Irrigation issues are typically not a common problem throughout VA's system of national cemeteries. At several cemeteries, adequate irrigation is necessary to maintain a cemetery's appearance up to the standards expected by veterans and their families. Mr. Rapp mentioned Quantico's irrigation need because it is a current issue that NCA is dealing with and represents an example of improving operational methods that can reduce ground maintenance requirements. Quantico has experienced turf problems due, in part, to lack of enough water to properly irrigate turf areas, particularly within new burial sections. Quantico was developed with three wells as the initial water supply; however, these wells have proved to be inadequate for domestic and irrigation needs. If the proper amount of water can be applied to turf areas when needed, this keeps the turf green and healthy and, in turn, reduces labor intensive maintenance required to keep the appearance of the grounds at an expected level. Irrigation projects are begun for several reasons, either to improve the appearance of a national cemetery, such as at Quantico, or to replace an older irrigation system. Irrigation systems are also included in the construction plans of all new national cemeteries.

b. Which national cemeteries are most in need of an irrigation system? (Please rank in order of greatest need).

Nearly all active VA national cemeteries have some form of irrigation. In general, all warm season turf areas need automated irrigation systems; however, cool season turf areas vary in need. Many cemeteries within cool season turf areas are adequately served by water supplied to the periphery of burial sections, where portable, agricultural type water devices are used to irrigate newly seeded areas or established areas during severe drought conditions.

In either case, an adequate water source is required, such as at Quantico National Cemetery. This requirement means that new wells must be drilled or new sources developed. Water and irrigation distribution systems require periodic maintenance that can be costly. As additional burial acreage is developed, existing irrigation systems must be extended and improved.

There are fourteen cemeteries at which projects have been identified in our planning process to improve the cemetery's water supply or irrigation. The projects are listed, in descending order, based on priority:

Fort Bliss *
Quantico *
Calverton *
Fort Sam Houston**
Golden Gate
Barrancas *
Camp Nelson
Florence
Nashville
Springfield
Natchez
Beaufort
Corinth
Kerrville

* Projects to be fully or partially funded in FY 2000
** Included as part of Major Construction project in FY 1998

c. What, if any, plans does VA have to correct it?

To solve the irrigation need at Quantico National Cemetery, there is an expansion project currently under design. The scope of this project includes identifying a new water source and design for water distribution and irrigation. The most feasible solution identified is to partner with the National Park Service and its current project to develop a water source for the Prince William Forest Park. If the partnership were completed, water would be provided by Prince William County and be directed through the use of a water line that would extend through the park, across Route 619, and into the cemetery.

In regard to the corrections or improvements at the other cemeteries listed above, there are irrigation projects identified for all of these sites in NCA's Five-Year Construction Program Plan. Additionally, irrigation requirements are included in all plans for new national cemeteries currently under development.

d. What would be the cost?

Costs are still being developed through the Quantico design effort. However, it appears that obtaining the new water source and installing an irrigation distribution system within the cemetery will be approximately $2.2 million. Cost estimates for all the other projects total approximately $5 million.

10. What, if any, experience does VA have with local volunteer programs at national cemeteries?

a. Can they be a helpful additional resource?

b. If so, what, if any, program does the National Cemetery Administration have nationally and locally to develop and utilize that resource?

Local volunteer programs play an active role at VA's national cemeteries. Volunteers are most visible on Memorial Day and Veterans Day when scouting organizations help place individual flags on the gravesites of veterans and assist with ushering and other logistical requirements. Other volunteer groups are actively involved in day-to-day activities; for example, local garden clubs volunteer their services to beautify cemeteries while veteran service organizations support the cemeteries by providing military honors.

The support of individual volunteers and volunteer organizations are important not only for helping to assist in beautifying the cemetery grounds, but for also involving the local community and acting to link the cemetery to the broader community. NCA recognizes the importance of volunteers and has established strategies to increase volunteer participation. On a national level, NCA reflects the importance of promoting volunteers by striving to increase volunteer participation by 10 percent per year. And at the local level, the individual national cemeteries work with the Volunteer Service at their servicing Medical Center to provide opportunities for volunteerism.

National Cemetery System Planning Document Through 2010

Department of Veterans Affairs

National Cemetery System Planning Document Through 2010

Prepared: August 1998

NCS Planning Document Through 2010
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National Cemetery System
Planning Document To FY 2010

I. Introduction

The National Cemetery System (NCS) honors the military service of our nation's veterans. We provide a dignified burial and lasting memorial for veterans and their eligible family members and we maintain our veterans' cemeteries as national shrines.

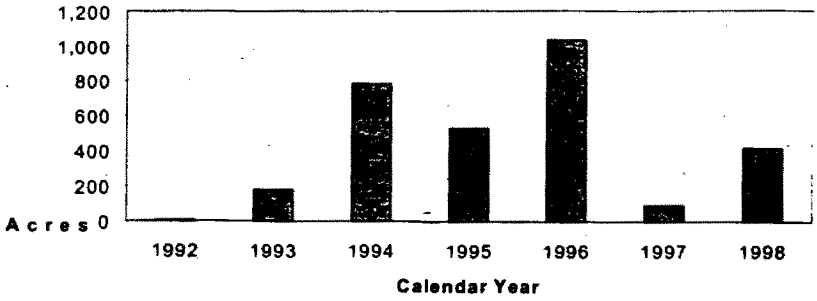
NCS operates 115 national cemeteries and 34 soldiers lots, plots and memorials to serve our nation's veterans and their families. National cemeteries are categorized by operational status which determines the extent of national and local burial benefits available to veterans. Operational categories are defined as:

- Open - Cemeteries open for casketed and cremated remains.
- Cremation Only - Accommodating cremated remains, and subsequent family member casketed remains.
- Closed - Cemeteries available only for subsequent family member remains, or for visitation only.

In order to provide a burial option for the greatest number of veterans and their eligible dependents, the NCS has acquired acreage to open new national cemeteries in previously unserved areas, and to expand and extend the life of existing national cemeteries to maintain existing service. From 1993 to the present NCS has grown in acreage by 22%, providing 1,061,800 new gravesites. Appropriate land acquisition has been viewed by NCS as a key component to providing increased accessibility, nationwide, to meet the rising demand for veteran burial options.

Within the inventory of new acreage, NCS has four new national cemeteries under construction, which will provide service to veterans residing in areas not currently served by a national or State veterans cemetery. Construction of these four new national cemeteries should be completed by the end of year 1999, resulting in a total of 119 national cemeteries.

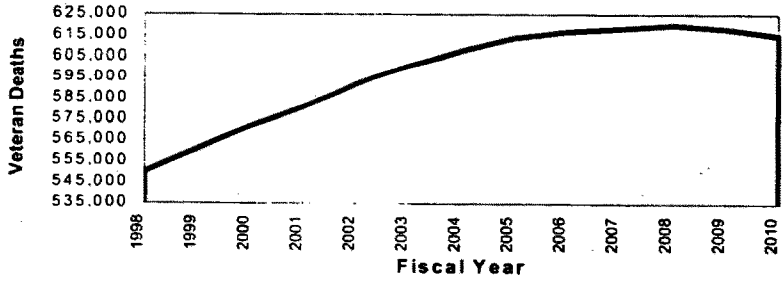
NCS Annual Acreage Acquisitions



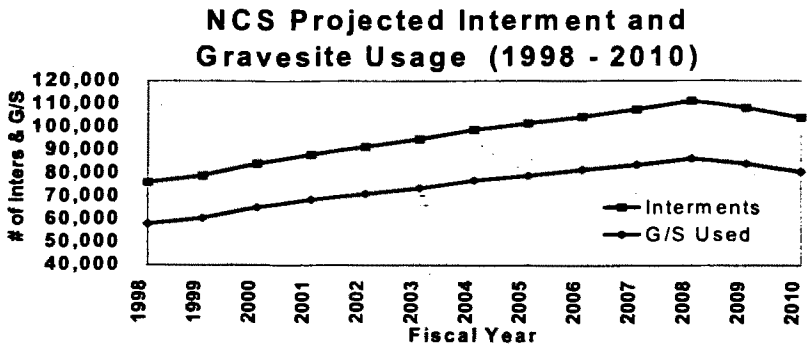
To maximize the use of land already in the NCS inventory, innovative burial techniques to extend the service life of existing national cemeteries are either being implemented or being explored. For instance, the use of pre-placed crypts, burial vaults set in excavated rows in advance of gravesite occupancy, have proven to save labor and maintenance costs, and to be highly efficient in the use of finite grave space.

Demographic data of the aging veteran population indicates a veteran death peak of approximately 620,000 in 2008. After that year, NCS projects a slow descent of the veteran-death curve, as depicted below, with the number of veteran deaths in 2010 still expected to be almost 12% greater than 1998 levels. A series of maps depicting the distribution of the U.S. veteran population over time is provided in Appendix A.

Projected Annual Veteran Deaths to FY 2010



The projected interment rate exceeding 111,000 total interments will be met operationally with the current inventory of NCS cemeteries (inclusive of the four scheduled to open within the next two years).



II. NCS Strategic Plan (1998 - 2003) Summary

The National Cemetery System has long recognized the need for long-term planning in order to achieve its goal to assure that all eligible veterans have reasonable access to a burial option. NCS has completed two Reports to Congress that described plans for its operations, identified the requirements for additional burial space for veterans, and identified the metropolitan areas most in need of veterans cemeteries. The NCS Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 1998 through 2003 provides a clear focus on NCS' mission, the primary goals and objectives associated with the accomplishment of that mission, the strategies that will be used, and the performance goals that measure progress toward achievement of the goals and objectives.

Goal One of the NCS Strategic Plan (1998 - 2003) is to assure that all eligible veterans have reasonable access to a burial option. Experience and recent historical data show that over 80% of persons interred in national cemeteries resided within 75 miles of the cemetery at the time of death. Based upon this experience, NCS defines reasonable access to a burial option to mean that a first interment option (whether for casketed remains or cremated remains) in a national or State veterans cemetery is available within 75 miles of the veteran's place of residence. (Multiple counts of the same veteran population are avoided in cases of service-area overlap.)

The current level of the veteran population served by a burial option is 68.6%. For the out-year Strategic Plan date of 2003, a combination of strategies is expected

to result in 80% of the veteran population having access to burial options. The three strategies addressing the goal of a burial option for all veterans are:

- Build new national cemeteries to expand service delivery.
- Expand existing cemeteries to continue to provide service.
- Encourage state's participation in State Cemetery Grants Program.

A. Build New National Cemeteries to Expand Service Delivery

Strategy #1 is oriented towards new cemetery site development in areas where coverage currently does not exist. In response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec. 412), "Veterans Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986" the National Cemetery System (then, the Department of Memorial Affairs, under the Veterans Administration) issued two reports on the National Cemetery System, in 1987 and 1994. As directed by the law, a key component of these reports was the identification of "ten geographic areas in the United States in which need for burial space for veterans is greatest..." These ten areas were identified based on their large concentration of veterans and because they were currently unserved by an existing open national cemetery or State veterans cemetery, i.e., a local veteran burial option in a veteran-dedicated government cemetery. The ten areas were then ranked by order of population, greatest to least.

1987 Report to Congress

1. Chicago, IL
2. Northern CA (San Francisco Area)
3. Miami/Fort Lauderdale, FL
4. Cleveland/Akron/Canton, OH
5. Detroit, MI
6. Pittsburgh, PA
7. Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
8. Seattle/Tacoma, WA
9. Albany/Utica, NY
10. Oklahoma City/Lawton, OK

1994 Report to Congress

1. Chicago, IL
2. Detroit, MI
3. Cleveland, OH
4. Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX
5. Sacramento, CA
6. Miami, FL
7. Atlanta, GA
8. Seattle, WA
9. St. Louis, MO
10. Albany, NY

From these Report lists, two national cemeteries have been built, San Joaquin Valley (northern California) and Tahoma (near Seattle); four are under construction, Saratoga National Cemetery (Albany area), Dallas-Ft. Worth National Cemetery, Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery (Chicago area), and a Cleveland area national cemetery; and VA has acquired land and design funds have been appropriated for future development of a national cemetery in the area of Oklahoma City/Lawton, OK. Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery has acquired land which will allow it to remain open and provide service to the St. Louis, Missouri, area until 2010. The remaining metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Detroit, Miami, Pittsburgh and Sacramento will be evaluated upon completion of our current phase of new cemetery development.

The four newest national cemeteries, in the Chicago, Albany, Dallas/Ft. Worth, and Cleveland areas, will all open by the end of 1999. With the Seattle-area national cemetery, these five sites collectively and directly address the potential needs of 2,624,000 veterans. The current status of the 13 collectively identified areas of greatest need follows.

AREAS IDENTIFIED AS MOST IN NEED	CURRENT STATUS
Northern CA (San Francisco area)	national cemetery opened (1992)
Seattle, WA	national cemetery opened (1997)
St. Louis, MO	existing cemetery will remain open until 2010
Albany, NY	N/C under construction (estimated opening 1999)
Chicago, IL	N/C under construction (estimated opening 1999)
Cleveland, OH	N/C under construction (estimated opening 1999)
Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX	N/C under construction (estimated opening 1999)
Oklahoma City, OK	land acquired - Master Plan being developed
Atlanta, GA	site for future evaluation
Detroit, MI	site for future evaluation
Miami, FL	site for future evaluation
Pittsburgh, PA	site for future evaluation
Sacramento, CA	site for future evaluation

In the current NCS Strategic Plan, the first strategy for accomplishing the goal of providing a burial option to all veterans is that the NCS will establish new cemeteries to provide service to currently unserved areas. The current Strategic Plan reflects no new national cemeteries being built during the planning period (1998-2003) beyond the four currently under construction. The maps in Appendix B display the areas of service delivery of current cemetery installations, new cemeteries under construction, and other sites remaining from the 1987 and 1994 Reports to Congress.

B. Expand Existing Cemeteries to Continue to Provide Service

Expanding existing cemeteries will be accomplished by acquiring additional land to continue to provide service and developing existing cemetery land for burial operations. In the case of land acquisition, NCS must assess what is feasible (determining, for instance, if contiguous land may still be found for expansion), and what is affordable. Land in and around urban areas is not only more expensive, but is also, generally, less available.

In 1992, NCS conducted an internal review of 75 cemeteries that were either closed or expected to close prior to 2015. The purpose of the review was to determine the potential to further develop and extend the service period of existing national cemeteries. There were 19 open cemeteries with contiguous undeveloped land; land was acquired at ten of these cemeteries. This long-range planning to keep NCS national cemeteries open continues. NCS is currently engaged in acquiring additional land for ten national cemeteries.

During the reporting period (1998-2003), the following construction projects will extend the service life of cemeteries depleting full-casket gravesites:

	Project Completion By FY:
Black Hills N/C, (SD)	1998
Camp Nelson N/C, (KY)	1998
Port Hudson N/C, (LA)	1998
Dayton N/C, (OH)	1999
Ft. Custer N/C, (MI)	1999
Ft. McPherson N/C, (NE)	1999
Florida N/C, (FL)	2000
Leavenworth N/C, (KS)	2000
Mountain Home N/C, (TN)	2000
National Memorial Cem of AZ, (AZ)	2000
Puerto Rico N/C, (PR)	2000
Biloxi N/C, (MS)	2001
Ft. Logan N/C, (CO)	2001
Ft. Richardson N/C, (AK)	2002
Santa Fe N/C, (NM)	2002
Ft. Snelling N/C, (MN)	2003

In addition to developing additional casketed burial space within the boundaries of an existing cemetery, NCS is expanding the use of land-efficient columbarium niches. Columbaria are being built at an increasing number of national cemeteries, including Tahoma National Cemetery and the four new cemeteries currently under construction. This option is seen not only as a way to maximize interment capacity within limited land, but it also reflects a growing public acceptance of

cremation as a burial option. Ten national cemeteries currently have columbaria, and more national cemeteries have columbaria under construction or planned.

Existing Columbaria

Calverton, NY
Ft. Rosecrans, CA
Ft. Sam Houston, TX
Houston, TX
Los Angeles, CA
Massachusetts, MA
National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, HI
Riverside, CA
Tahoma, WA
Willamette, OR

Columbaria Planned or Currently Under Construction

Abraham Lincoln, IL
Barrancas, FL
Bay Pines, FL
Cleveland (Not officially named), OH
Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX
Florida, FL
National Memorial of Arizona, AZ
Saratoga, NY

Within each annual update of the NCS five-year budget and construction plan, consideration is given to all sites that may need or warrant the establishment or continuation of columbarium units. Columbaria can be added to most cemeteries after full-casket options have been exhausted, and if the demographics of the local veteran community indicate support and willingness to use columbaria.

By 2003, four national cemeteries are expected to run out of full-casket gravesites, and another 13 are expected to exhaust all full-casket and cremation sites. Depletion activity to 2003 is categorized as follows:

- Four cemeteries are projected to close to full-casket interments by 2003 because there is no appropriate land available for expansion adjacent to the sites. These cemeteries, which will continue to offer cremation burial through 2003, are:

Salisbury, NC	2000
Culpeper, VA	2001
Little Rock, AR	2001
Woodlawn, NY	2002

- Cemeteries currently closed to casketed burials that will deplete their inventory of cremation sites by 2003 are:

Cave Hill, KY	1998
Golden Gate, CA	1998
Raleigh, NC	1998
Long Island, NY	1999
Philadelphia, PA	1999
Winchester, VA	1999
Wood, WI	1999
Staunton, VA	2000
Seven Pines, VA	2001
Hampton, VA	2002
Nashville, TN	2002
New Albany, IN	2002
Richmond, VA	2002

Of these 13 national cemeteries there are only three with veteran populations that lose service through closing (Golden Gate, Raleigh, and Staunton). The other ten national cemeteries are located in areas where another national or State veterans cemetery is in close proximity. The overlapping service areas will still offer burial options. The combined populations of the remaining three closing national cemeteries constitute less than 1% of the entire veteran population. (See Appendix C for complete list of cemetery closings for 1998-2010.)

C. Encourage States Participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP)

To achieve the Strategic Plan goal of a burial option within a reasonable distance of all veterans, it is also necessary that state veterans cemeteries be established or expanded to complement VA's system of national cemeteries. NCS administers the State Cemetery Grants Program, which provides grants to States of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing, expanding, or improving State veterans cemeteries. These cemeteries may be located by the States in areas where there are no plans for NCS to operate and maintain a national cemetery. It is difficult to project future activity for this program because requests for grants are generated from individual States. A State must enact legislation to commit funding to a project that will serve a clearly defined population and require State funds for maintenance in perpetuity.

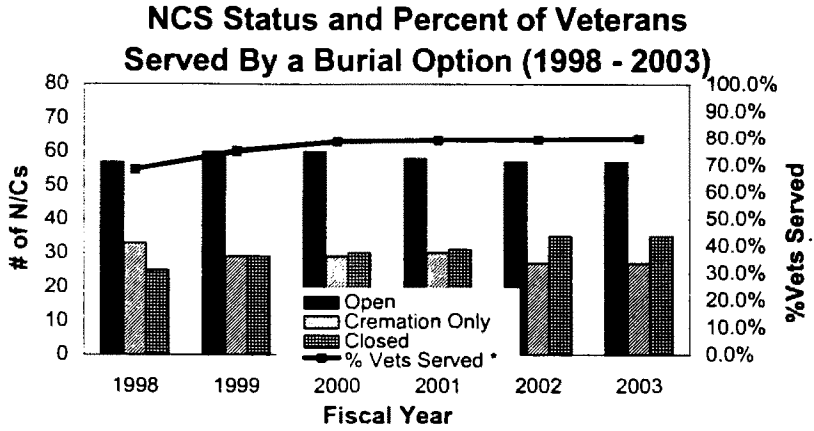
The State Cemetery Grants Program should continue to have a very positive impact on the percentage of veterans served. State veteran cemeteries now provide service to over 2.5 million veterans and their families. The SCGP, authorized by Congress in 1978 and funded since 1980, has supported the establishment of 40 State veterans cemeteries, as well as provided the funds to expand or improve such cemeteries in over one hundred projects. Interments to

date have exceeded 100,000. The Strategic Plan performance goal to annually increase the number of veterans served by a State veterans cemetery by 35,000 has, thus far, been exceeded in practice. By FY 2000, nine new State veterans cemeteries are expected to open at Sussex County, DE; Milledgeville, GA; Madison, IN; Agawam and Winchendon, MA; Higginsville and Springfield, MO; Miles City, MT; and Boscawen, NH. Collectively, these veterans cemeteries will provide a burial option to an additional 520,000 veterans.

A legislative proposal has been submitted to make the SCGP more attractive to the States by increasing the maximum Federal share of the costs of construction from 50% to 100%, and by making initial equipment costs eligible for grant funding.

D. Summary of Service Delivery Plans Through 2003

These three strategies, to build new national cemeteries, to expand existing cemeteries to continue to provide service, and to encourage States' participation in the SCGP, are critical to the achievement of NCS' performance goal to increase the percentage of veterans served by a burial option in a national or State veterans cemetery within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence to 80 percent by FY 2003. By the end of FY 2003, NCS will comprise 57 open national cemeteries, 27 national cemeteries offering only cremation gravesites, and 35 national cemeteries which will be closed to all first interments. (See Appendix C for detail).



* Reflects 119 N/Cs, and NCS-supported State veteran cemeteries.

III. Planning to 2010

The Strategic plan serves as the spring-board to the flow of all future planning. This section of the report describes the impact on service delivery by extending the strategies contained in the current Strategic Plan to 2010, which are:

- Build new national cemeteries to expand service delivery.
- Expand existing cemeteries to continue to provide service.
- Encourage state's participation in State Cemetery Grants Program.

A. Build New National Cemeteries to Expand Service Delivery

By the turn of the century, six national cemeteries will be completed and operational from the original 1987 Congressional report list of areas in greatest need for a national cemetery. The seven areas identified as being in greatest need from the combined 1987/1994 listings still remaining are:

Atlanta, GA
Detroit, MI
Miami, FL
Oklahoma City/Lawton (Fort Sill), OK
Pittsburgh, PA
Sacramento, CA
St. Louis, MO

NCS will continue to evaluate the need to establish new national cemeteries at these seven locations as part of its strategic management process after the new cemeteries now under construction are opened.

(Note: St. Louis was originally listed in the 1994 report on the assumption that the national cemetery serving the St. Louis area, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, would deplete full-casket sites in 1998. Since the inclusion of St. Louis in the 1994 report, however, Jefferson Barracks has acquired additional land which will allow it to remain open for full-casket first interments until FY 2010.)

B. Expand Existing Cemeteries to Continue to Provide Service

Seven open national cemeteries are projected to deplete their full-casket sites in the period 2004 to 2010. Potential to acquire land exists at all of these cemeteries except Jefferson Barracks and Santa Fe. (See Appendix D for site-specific detail).

Beaufort, SC	2004
Lebanon, KY	2004
Natchez, MS	2004
Barrancas, FL	2008
Rock Island, IL	2008
Santa Fe, NM	2008
Jefferson Barracks, MO	2010

Cemeteries that will deplete their inventory of cremation sites by 2010 are:

Annapolis, MD	2004
Culpeper, VA	2004
Little Rock, AR	2004
Alton, IL	2005
Cypress Hills, NY	2005
Finn's Point, NJ	2005
Alexandria, VA	2007
Beaufort, SC	2008
Beverly, NJ	2008
Ft. Harrison, VA	2008
Baltimore, MD	2009
Danville, VA	2010
Glendale, VA	2010
Quincy, IL	2010

The sites affect about 522,500 veterans and are being evaluated for demographic impact, potential land acquisition, columbaria construction, and an enhanced partnership with the States through the State Cemetery Grants Program.

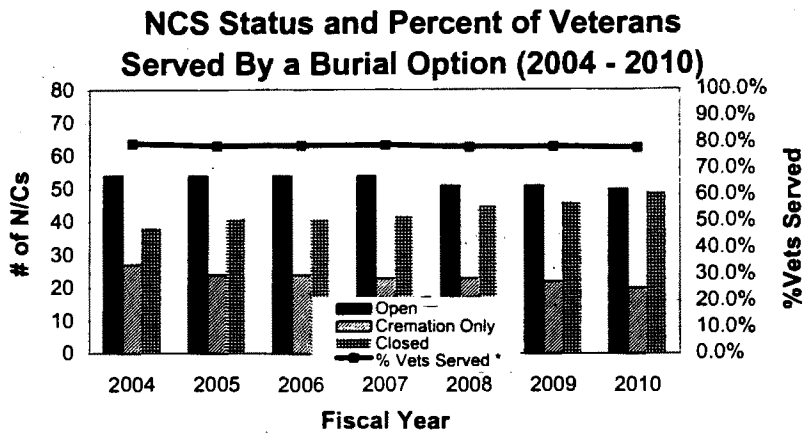
C. Encourage States Participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program (SCGP)

The SCGP will continue to be a key strategy towards achieving the goal of providing a burial option for all veterans. There is great interest among the many States in establishing State veterans cemeteries in this time period. States have expressed interest for the following areas:

Fort Huachuca, AZ
Little Rock, AR
Fort Dodge, KS
Camp Dodge, IA
Carbondale, IL
Redding and Yountville, CA
Western, Eastern and Central Kentucky
Southeast and Northeast MO
Alliance and Grand Island, NE

D. Summary of Service Delivery Plans Through 2010

Extending the three strategies contained in the Strategic Plan will remain critical in order to provide veterans with a burial option in a national or State veterans cemetery within a reasonable distance (75 miles) of their residence. By FY 2010, the percent of veterans served will be about 78.2%, if no new national cemeteries are constructed during this period. By the close of FY 2010, NCS will have in inventory 50 open national cemeteries, 20 national cemeteries offering only cremation gravesites, and 49 national cemeteries with all grave-sites depleted. (See Appendix C).



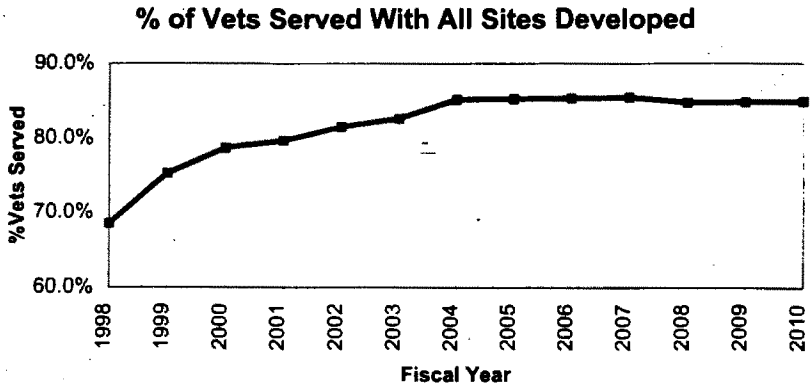
* Reflects 119 N/Cs and NCS-supported State veteran cemeteries.

IV. Evaluation of Areas of Greatest Need for Burial Services

Within VA's strategic management process and the annual update of the five-year budget and construction plan, NCS will evaluate the need to establish new national cemeteries after the four new cemeteries currently under construction are opened. In addition to the sites identified in the 1987 and 1994 studies, other sites will also be considered based on veteran demographics, daily operational and maintenance costs, the feasibility of establishing State veterans cemeteries, and the interest of the local veteran community. These sites include geographic areas not currently served by a national or State veterans cemetery and areas in which service delivery would end as existing national cemeteries exhaust all available land. (See Appendix E for detail).

The sites identified in the 1987 and 1994 studies will continue to be the priority areas for future consideration for establishing new national cemeteries. Six of the seven remaining sites not currently serviced by a veterans cemetery (Atlanta, Detroit, Oklahoma City/Lawton, Miami, Pittsburgh and Sacramento) have a combined veteran population of about 1,800,000 veterans, or 7.2% of the total veteran population. In FY 2010, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, in St. Louis, Missouri, will deplete its current inventory of full-casket gravesites. NCS plans to maintain existing levels of service to veterans in the greater St. Louis area.

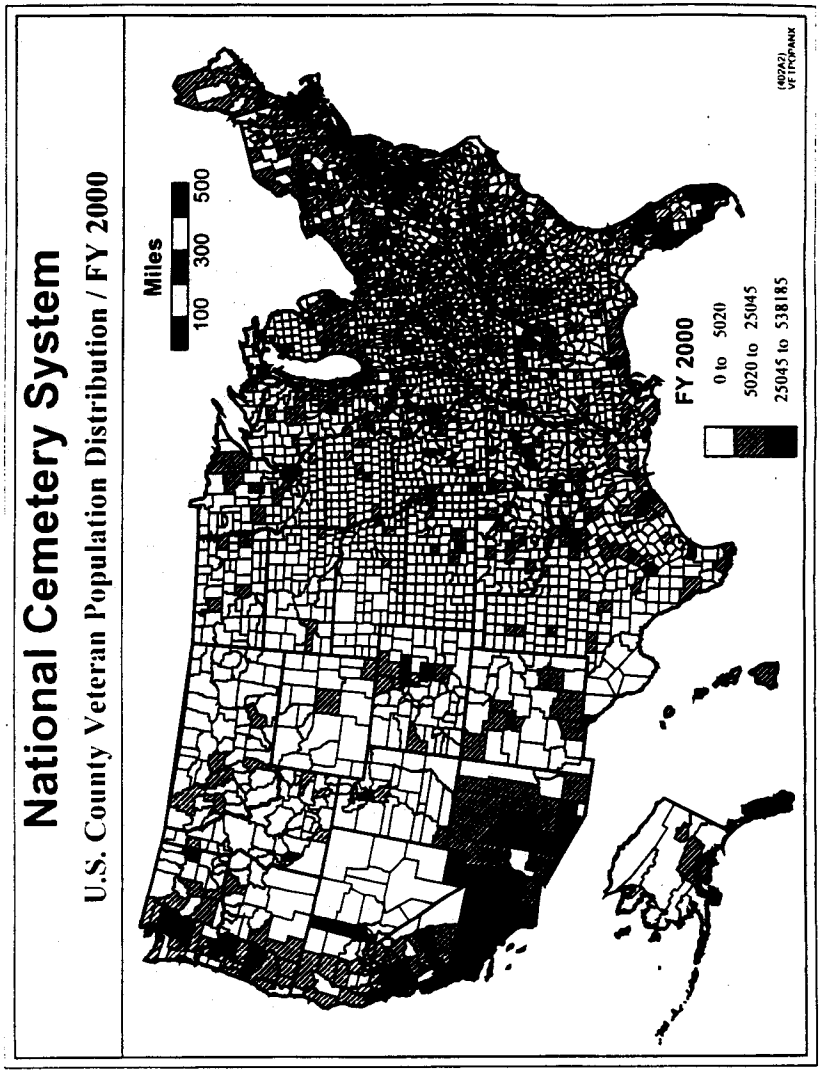
Development of these seven sites, along with an additional 35,000 veterans served annually through the State Cemetery Grants Program, would result in about 85% of all veterans having reasonable access to a burial option in either a national or State veterans cemetery during the period of 2004 to 2010, as depicted in the graph below:

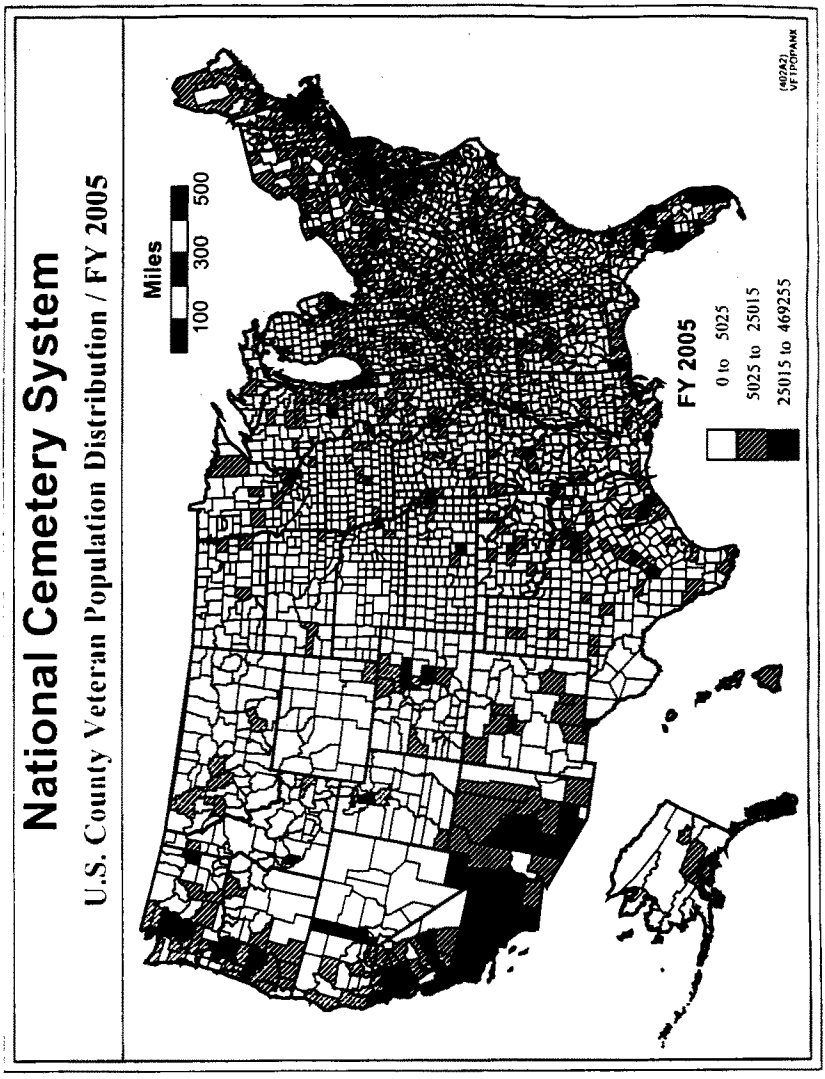


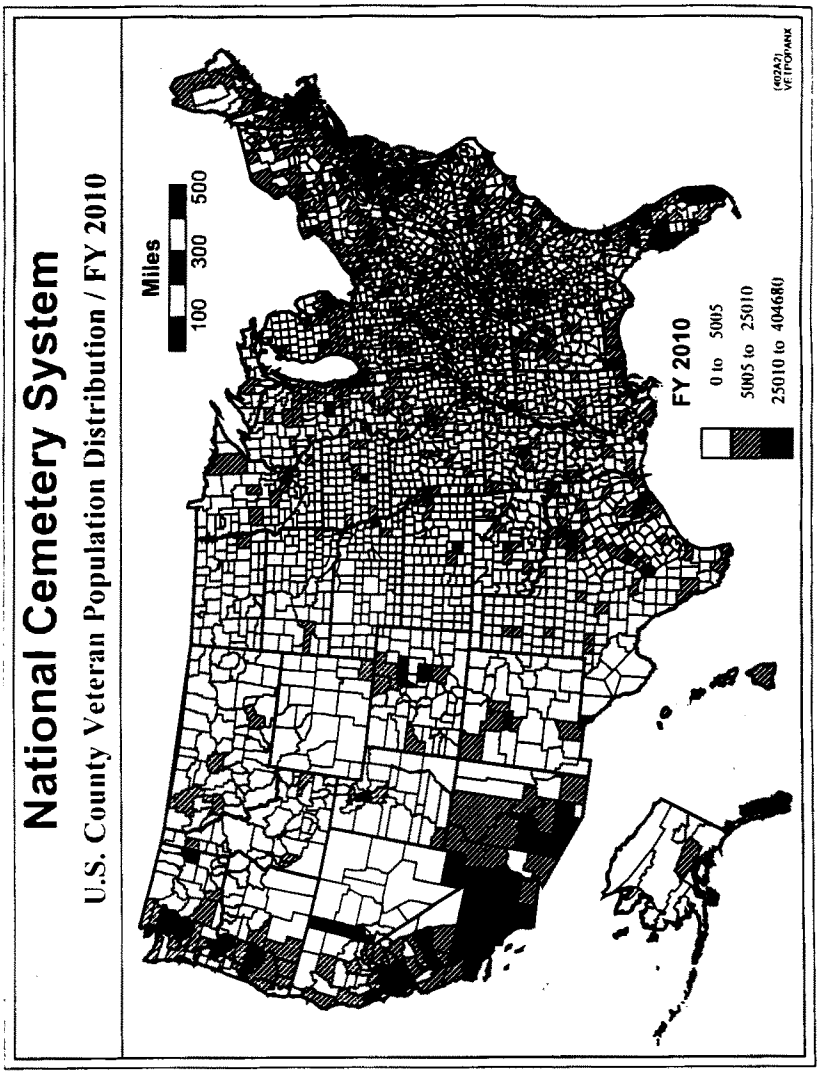
Approximately 263,000 veterans in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area will lose reasonable access to a burial option after 2008, when Beverly National Cemetery is expected to deplete its cremation gravesites. Hampton, Virginia, veterans (some 175,000) will also lose access to a burial option when several local NCS cemeteries close in 2008 and 2010.

APPENDIX A

Demographic Maps

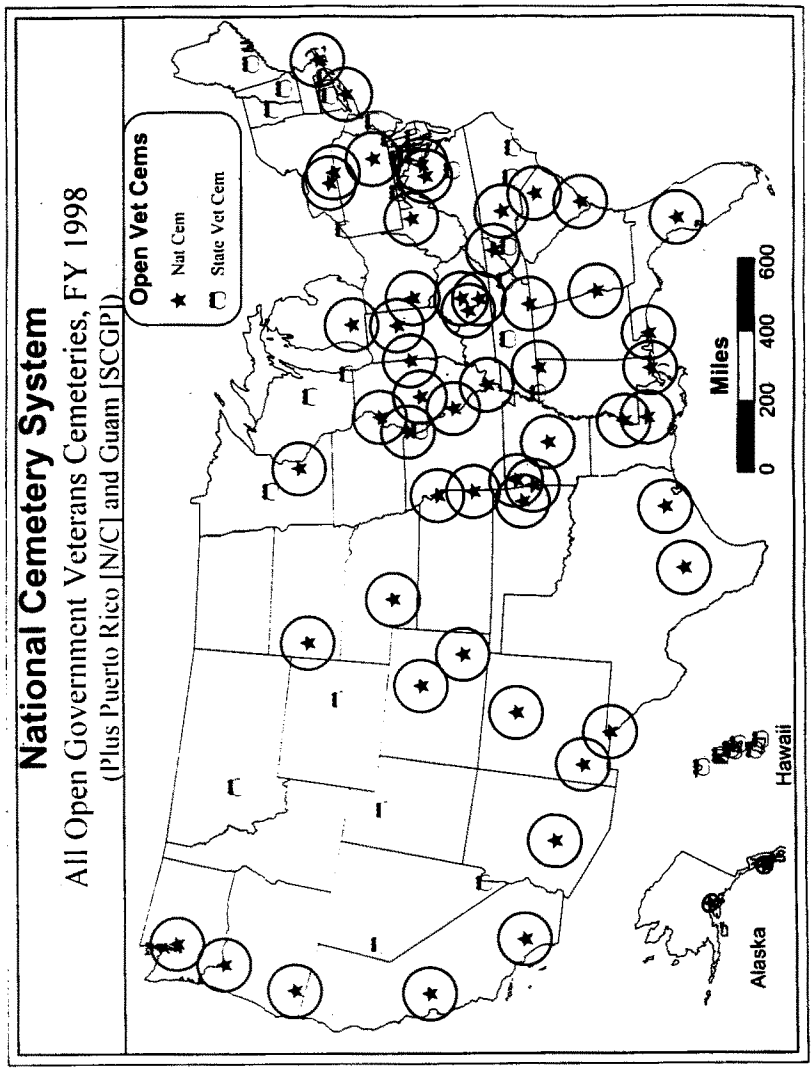

National Cemetery System
U.S. County Veteran Population Distribution / FY 2000
Miles
100 300 500
FY 2000
0 to 5020
5020 to 25045
25045 to 538185
(402A2)
VF ITC/PANK


National Cemetery System
U.S. County Veteran Population Distribution / FY 2005
Miles
100 300 500
FY 2005
0 to 5025
5025 to 25015
25015 to 469255
(402A2)
VFTPOPANK

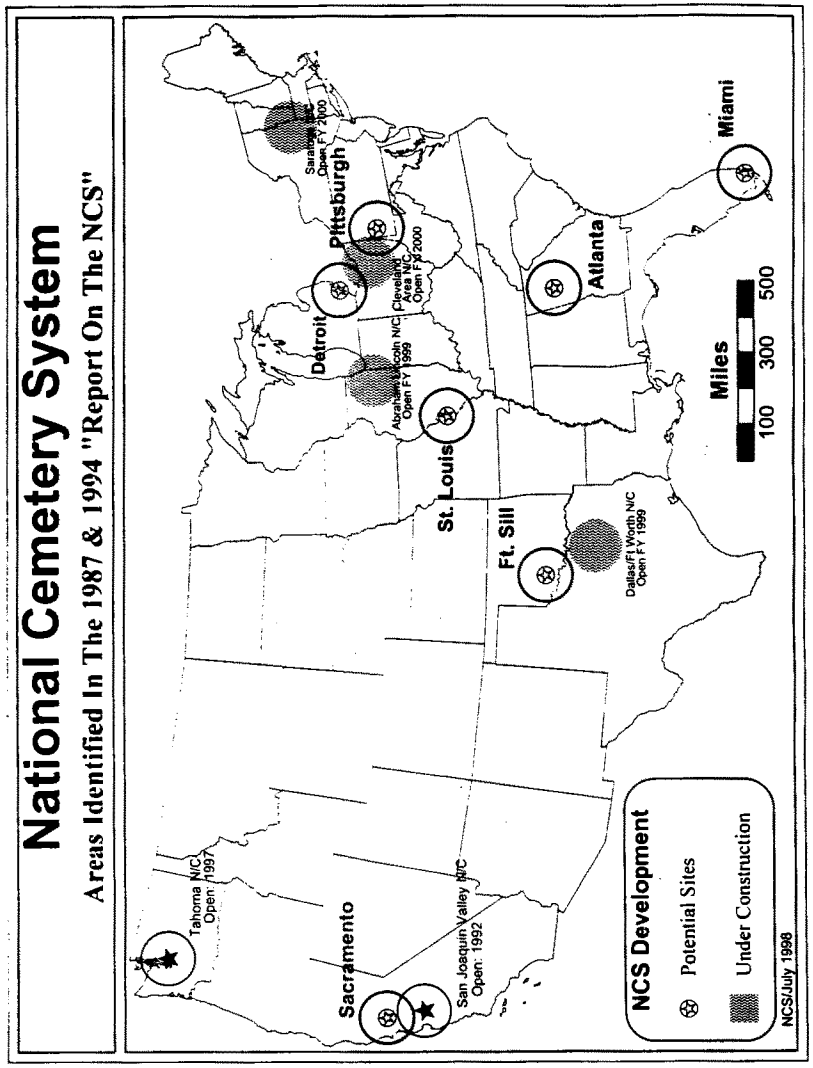

National Cemetery System
U.S. County Veteran Population Distribution / FY 2010
Miles
100 300 500
FY 2010
0 to 5005
5005 to 25010
25010 to 404680

APPENDIX B

Geographic Point Maps


National Cemetery System
All Open Government Veterans Cemeteries, FY 1998
(Plus Puerto Rico [N/C] and Guam [SCGP])
Open Vet Cems
Nat Cem
State Vet Cem
Miles
0
200
400
600
Alaska
Hawaii

National Cemetery System
Government Veteran Cemeteries Offering a Burial Option
(Plus Puerto Rico [N/C] and Guam [SCGP])
Site Inventory
Open N/C
Crem Only N/C
State Vet Cem
Miles
0 200 400 600
Alaska
Hawaii
NCS/July 1998


National Cemetery System
Areas Identified In The 1987 & 1994 "Report On The NCS"
Tahoma NC
Open: 1997
Sacramento
San Joaquin Valley NC
Open: 1992
Saratoga NC
Open FY 2000
Pittsburgh
Cleveland Area NC
Open FY 2000
Detroit
Abraham Lincoln NC
Open FY 1999
St. Louis
Ft. Sill
Dallas/Ft Worth NC
Open FY 1998
Atlanta
Miami
Miles
100 300 500
NCS Development
Potential Sites
Under Construction
NCS/July 1998

APPENDIX C

NCS Timetable of National Cemetery Status Changes

APPENDIX C

NCS Timetable of National Cemetery Status Changes and National Cemetery Cemetery Establishment (1998 - 2010)

Close Of FY	ESTABLISHMENT	STATUS DOWNGRADES		TABULATION			
	Openings	From Open to Cremation Only	From Cremation Only to Closed	Open	CR Only	Closed	Total N/Cs
1998			Cave Hill	57	35	23	115
			Golden Gate	57	34	24	115
			Raleigh	57	33	25	115
1999	Abraham Lincoln		Long Island	58	32	26	116
	Dallas/Ft. Worth		Philadelphia	59	31	27	117
	Saratoga		Winchester	60	30	28	118
			Wood	60	29	29	118
2000	Cleveland	Salisbury	Staunton	60	29	30	119
2001		Culpeper	Seven Pines	59	29	31	119
		Little Rock		58	30	31	119
2002		Woodlawn	Hampton	57	30	32	119
			Nashville	57	29	33	119
			New Albany	57	28	34	119
			Richmond	57	27	35	119
2003				57	27	35	119
2004		Barrancas *	Annapolis	56	27	36	119
		Lebanon *	Culpeper	55	27	37	119
		Natchez *	Little Rock	54	27	38	119
2005			Alton	54	26	39	119
			Cypress Hills	54	25	40	119
			Finn's Point	54	24	41	119
2006				54	24	41	119
2007			Alexandria, LA	54	23	42	119
2008		Beaufort *	Beaufort *	53	23	43	119
		Rock Island *	Beverly	52	23	44	119
		Santa Fe	Ft. Harrison	51	23	45	119
2009			Baltimore	51	22	46	119
2010		Jefferson Barracks	Danville, VA	50	22	47	119
			Glendale	50	21	48	119
			Quincy	50	20	49	119

* = National cemeteries with land acquisition potential.

APPENDIX D

Summary of National Cemeteries Depleting Full-Casket Sites

APPENDIX D

Enclosed is a summary of each national cemetery scheduled to deplete full casket sites through the year 2010.

National Cemetery	Full Casket Depletion Date
Salisbury N/C	FY 2000
Culpeper N/C	FY 2001
Little Rock N/C	FY 2001
Woodlawn N/C	FY 2002
Barrancas N/C	FY 2004
Lebanon N/C	FY 2004
Natchez N/C	FY 2004
Beaufort N/C	FY 2008
Rock Island N/C	FY 2008
Santa Fe N/C	FY 2008
Jefferson Barracks N/C	FY 2010

Note: On the following pages the term "AGS" refers to Adjacent Gravesite Set-Asides. AGS is a program whereby veteran-dependent gravesites are reserved for side-by-side use instead of double-depth usage, due either to the soil conditions at the national cemetery or by request when both a husband and wife are veterans. "GRS" refers to gravesites reserved under the Gravesite Reservation System. This program, established by the Department of the Army in the 1940's at Army post cemeteries allowed active duty and military veterans to reserve specific gravesites for future use by the veteran and his/her dependents. GRS was discontinued in 1962 by the Department of the Army. However, reservations made prior to program closure continue to be honored by NCS.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Salisbury National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Salisbury N/C, in Salisbury, North Carolina, began burials in 1863 to accommodate the prison camp population of captured Union troops. In 1865, the site was designated a national cemetery. In the following year other remains were added from surrounding military sites. Recent additions, in 1976, 1985 and 1995 have brought the total cemetery acreage figure to 12.459 acres.

Current Status:

Salisbury is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2000. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2021. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Salisbury N/C had:

16,936	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	316	Cremain Sites Used
162	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	100	Cremain Sites Available*
43	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 1,500 cremain spaces, which should last to FY 2021.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 354,900.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	226	1	28
1994	266	5	41
1995	263	1	35
1996	260	1	45
1997	288	2	41

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Salisbury National Cemetery shares its 75-mile service area with four other national cemeteries, two of which are fully open to all types of interments. Additionally, Salisbury N/C is bracketed by two fairly new NCS supported state veterans cemeteries.

Expansion Alternatives:

Some areas scattered throughout the cemetery could be used for additional cremain sites since they are unsuitable for full-casket gravesites. There is no land adjacent to the cemetery for future expansion.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

More than 50% of Salisbury's service area overlaps with other veteran cemeteries that are fully opened to all types of burials. As a result, NCS does not plan to expand the service capabilities at Salisbury N/C, including the construction of any columbarium due to the availability of in-ground cremain sites until 2021. Salisbury N/C will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2000. At that time, NCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting operations and maintenance with the private sector.

Prepared: July, 1998 National Cemetery System (401B/402A)

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Culpeper National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Culpeper N/C, in Culpeper, Virginia, was another cemetery created as a result of the Civil War. Gathering casualties from many battles in the surrounding area, Culpeper National Cemetery was officially established in 1867. Additional acreage was added in 1890, 1948, 1975 and 1978 to bring the current total to 17.201 acres, all of which has been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Culpeper is an open national cemetery. Revised workload projections indicate that full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2001. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2001.
(Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Culpeper N/C had:

6,836	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	365	Cremain Sites Used
496	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	20	Cremain Sites Available*
10	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 150 cremain spaces, which should last to FY 2004.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 571,250.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	171	0	23
1994	183	0	30
1995	190	0	45
1996	194	1	34
1997	204	0	36

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Culpeper N/C largely overlaps with the service areas of two fully open national cemeteries (Quantico N/C and West Virginia N/C) and the service areas of ten other Virginia national cemeteries with available cremain space. Further, the newly dedicated State veteran cemetery in Amelia, Virginia, intersects some of the Culpeper service area.

Expansion Alternatives:

Acquisition of and expansion on to vacant property north of Section O was evaluated. The property consists of ravines, a seasonal stream, undesirable fill material, and debris. This area is therefore not considered suitable for gravesite development.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

Approximately 85% of the veteran population in Culpeper's service area is served by an open State or national cemetery. Quantico and West Virginia national cemeteries are expected to have space for full casket burials until at least FY 2027. Due to these overlapping service areas, NCS does not plan to expand the service capabilities at Culpeper N/C, including construction of any columbarium. Culpeper will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2001. At that time NCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting operations.

Prepared: July, 1998

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Little Rock National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Little Rock N/C, in Little Rock, Arkansas, began burials as a city military cemetery. After the Civil War, the U.S. Government bought the land and consolidated remains from surrounding sites. Established as a national cemetery in 1868, Little Rock N/C has had one purchase, one conveyance and two donations resulting in expansions to the cemetery. The cemetery area is 30.69 acres, all of which have been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Little Rock is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2001. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2004. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Little Rock N/C had:

20,639	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	414	Cremain Sites Used
1,067	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	110	Cremain Sites Available*
184	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 250 cremain spaces, which should last to FY 2004.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 112,000.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	371	2	34
1994	385	5	34
1995	318	5	46
1996	376	1	56
1997	399	4	69

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Little Rock National Cemetery shares 10% of its service area with three other national cemeteries, as well as the NCS supported State veterans cemetery in Memphis, Tennessee. One of those national cemeteries has only limited cremain space available, while the rest are fully open for all types of interments.

Expansion Alternatives:

Very few opportunities/spaces exist for additional cremain sites or for columbaria.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS does not plan to expand the service capabilities at Little Rock N/C, including construction of any columbarium, because Arkansas is considering the establishment of a state veterans cemetery in Little Rock with Federal assistance through the State Cemetery Grants Program. The cemetery will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2001. At that time, NCS will evaluate the cost-effectiveness of contracting operations and maintenance with the private sector.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Woodlawn National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Woodlawn N/C, in Woodlawn, New York, began burials from its army camp and prison grounds in 1864, and was dedicated as a national cemetery in 1874. Since its establishment as a national cemetery, Woodlawn N/C has been expanded four times from the original of 2.5 acres. Acreage acquired in 1877, 1939 and 1940 added another 5.124 acres. In 1987, a donation of 2.919 acres brought the total to 10.543 acres. All acreage has been developed for burial operation.

Current Status:

Woodlawn is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2000. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2005. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Woodlawn N/C had:

7,013	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	235	Cremain Sites Used
380	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	174	Cremain Sites Available*
136	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 1,600 cremain spaces, which should last beyond FY 2030.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 220,700.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data shows the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	117	4	35
1994	75	3	29
1995	89	1	29
1996	95	3	32
1997	109	4	47

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Many of the veterans and their families now potentially served by Woodlawn N/C will be able to use the services of the recently expanded national cemetery in Bath, NY, as well as Indiantown Gap N/C in Pennsylvania. Bath N/C is approximately 40 miles from Woodlawn N/C, and is expected to have space for full-casket burials until FY 2017. Indiantown Gap N/C is approximately 120 miles from Woodlawn N/C, and is expected to have space for full-casket burials beyond FY 2030.

Expansion Alternatives:

Three sides are hemmed-in by developed properties, and 5 vacant acres to the north are owned by the City of Elmira, which the city does not want to sell. A steep slope along the western boundary is not usable for casketed interments, but could accommodate a linear columbarium wall. Sections A through H are full and cannot be further developed. The newly donated section to the north is about 63% full.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

Bath N/C and Indiantown Gap N/C together cover 72% of Woodlawn N/C's service area veteran population. As a result, NCS does not plan to expand the service capabilities at Woodlawn N/C, including the construction of any columbarium due to the availability of in-ground cremain sites beyond FY 2030. Woodlawn N/C will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2002. At that time, NCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting operations and maintenance with the private sector.

Prepared: July, 1998 National Cemetery System (401B/402A)

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Barrancas National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Barrancas N/C, in Pensacola, Florida, began its existence as a Navy Yard Cemetery. In 1868 the Navy Department transferred the cemetery to the War Department, and it became a national cemetery. Additional transfers of land in 1944 and 1950 brought the acreage up to 29.910 acres. Barrancas received an additional 15.2 acres in 1986. Current acreage is 45.110 acres, all of which has been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Barrancas is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2004. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2004. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Barrancas N/C had:

20,379	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	1,556	Cremain Sites Used
3,330	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	523	Cremain Sites Available*
1,372	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 1,200 cremain spaces, which should last to FY 2009.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 133,600.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	597	36	119
1994	578	34	177
1995	604	23	140
1996	656	35	176
1997	662	37	187

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Barrancas N/C is about 45 miles from the national cemetery in Mobile, Alabama, which is currently closed to full-casket first interments. Additionally, the fully open national cemetery at Biloxi, Mississippi is only about 85 miles from Barrancas N/C. Biloxi covers 39% of the Barrancas N/C service area veteran population.

Expansion Alternatives:

The cemetery is directly adjacent to property held by the Department of the Navy.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS plans to keep Barrancas N/C fully operational beyond 2030 because it has sole coverage for about 61% of its service area. Future cemetery development will address requirements for casket as well as cremated remains, including the construction of columbarium. NCS is working with the Department of the Navy to identify suitable land for transfer. Up to 200 acres of undeveloped Navy land to the northwest of the cemetery has several contaminated landfills which will require clean-up.

Prepared: July, 1998

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Lebanon National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Lebanon N/C, in Lebanon, Kentucky, began burials in 1862 and eventually gathered in Civil War dead from a radius of some fifty miles. Officially established as a national cemetery in 1867, Lebanon National Cemetery has incorporated two donations of land, in 1983 and 1985, and has a total area of 5.8 acres, all of which has been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Lebanon is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2004. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces after 2011. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Lebanon N/C had:

2,892	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	20	Cremain Sites Used
807	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	42	Cremain Sites Available
21	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 221,100.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	123	0	2
1994	131	0	2
1995	131	0	1
1996	134	0	4
1997	163	0	2

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Lebanon National Cemetery has a service area that is partially shared by the service areas of nine other national cemeteries, and two NCS supported state veteran cemeteries. Of the national cemeteries, two are open to all types of interments, as are the two state veterans cemeteries, both located in Tennessee. Approximately 80% of the Lebanon N/C service area overlaps with open national or state veterans cemeteries.

Expansion Alternatives:

Farmland adjacent to the cemetery could be acquired for expansion of the cemetery.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS plans to keep Lebanon N/C fully operational for both casket and cremation burials. A land donation of 9.0 adjacent acres (no cost to VA) is being finalized. Development of this land will ensure full operation until beyond 2030. Development of additional acreage to be donated will be accomplished through VA's construction program. Appropriate space will be provided to accommodate casket and cremation burials.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Natchez National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Natchez N/C, in Natchez, Mississippi, began burials in 1866 by consolidating interments from battlefields, military hospitals and other military burial sites within a fifty-mile radius of the cemetery. This cemetery was initially established on 10.72 acres of land. No acreage expansion has occurred since that time, and all acreage has been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Natchez is an open national cemetery. Revised workload projections indicate that full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY04. Natchez N/C is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY30. (Note that references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Natchez N/C had:

5,873	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	24	Cremain Sites Used
444	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	30	Cremain Sites Available*
20	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available, a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 300 cremain spaces, which should last beyond FY 2030.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 84,450.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	81	0	4
1994	66	12	2
1995	92	1	5
1996	103	2	3
1997	75	2	7

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

There are three other national cemeteries located some 75 miles from Natchez N/C, and one (Port Hudson N/C) is fully open for all types of interments. The other two national cemeteries may accept cremated remains for first interment.

Expansion Alternatives:

This cemetery has been developed upon a series of sloped plateaus which result in many areas that are not suitable for full-casket burials but may accommodate cremains, whether in-ground or columbaria. Open fields to the south and east of the cemetery have been evaluated for possible expansion. However, the land comprises the grounds of an historical estate and the owner has no interest in selling any part.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS does not plan to expand the service capabilities at Natchez N/C because 65% of its service area overlaps with other national cemeteries. In addition, the construction of columbarium is not planned due to the availability of in-ground cremain sites beyond FY 2030. Natchez N/C will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2004. At that time, NCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting operations and maintenance with the private sector.

Prepared: July, 1998 National Cemetery System (401B/402A)

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Beaufort National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Beaufort N/C, in Beaufort, South Carolina, was established and began burials in 1863. This national cemetery, enclosed by a brick wall, retains its original area of 28.920 acres. All land has been developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Beaufort is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2008. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2008. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Beaufort N/C had:

14,129	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	438	Cremain Sites Used
2,134	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	219	Cremain Sites Available*
129	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*A review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified no further potential sites in this densely compacted national cemetery, other than those previously inventoried.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 112,000.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	210	1	48
1994	243	2	46
1995	239	2	50
1996	236	1	59
1997	249	3	50

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

The Beaufort N/C service area intersects the jurisdiction of one national cemetery and no state veterans cemeteries. The other national cemetery in South Carolina, Florence N/C, shares about 7% of Beaufort N/C's service area.

Expansion Alternatives:

Burial currently occurs in the two sections indicated on the map; Section 40 has 279 sites available and Section 66 has 150 sites available. In addition, there are approximately 1500 unoccupied sites scattered throughout the rest of the cemetery. The only real opportunities for expansion lie in potential new land.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS plans to acquire additional land to keep Beaufort N/C open because there is virtually no service area overlap with other national or state veterans cemeteries. Appropriate space will be provided to accommodate casketed and cremated remains. The NCS is currently pursuing state National Guard land, and a land donation of 4 +/- acres which was proffered by the City of Beaufort on October 22, 1997, which will extend the life of the cemetery to beyond 2030.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Rock Island National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

A one-acre plot created on the grounds of the United States Arsenal, Rock Island N/C, in Moline, Illinois, was established and began burials in 1863. Its initial purpose was to provide burial space for the local hospital, and for the guards at the large prisoner of war camp located there. Since its dedication, Rock Island National Cemetery has received four transfers of land from the adjacent arsenal, in 1926, 1936, 1950 and in 1990. The 44.31 acres have been entirely developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Rock Island is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2008. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2015. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Rock Island N/C had:

16,136	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	741	Cremain Sites Used
460	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	56	Cremain Sites Available*
1,015	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 1,500 cremain spaces, which should last beyond FY 2015.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 155,900.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	416	37	78
1994	387	35	87
1995	408	32	86
1996	414	36	96
1997	428	42	130

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Rock Island National Cemetery shares a small part of its 75-mile service area with three national cemeteries, and two state veterans cemeteries. Less than 40% of its service area overlaps with other veteran cemeteries.

Expansion Alternatives:

There are 23 acres of adjacent land on the Rock Island Arsenal site suitable for cemetery expansion. Many sites exist for potential columbaria. Most developed sections are "buried out".

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS plans to keep Rock Island N/C fully operational by acquiring adjacent land from the Rock Island Arsenal. VA will work with the Arsenal to transfer 23 acres of land to the cemetery, which should extend full service capabilities beyond FY 2030.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Santa Fe National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Santa Fe N/C, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, began burials as a consolidation of several area Civil War battlefield sites. Santa Fe National Cemetery is the only installation in the System to have been designated as a national cemetery twice, in 1875 and in 1892. The present site encompasses the originally dedicated cemetery and the local post cemetery with area-consolidated burials. Additions in 1894, 1989 and 1995 brought acreage totals to 78.57. All acreage suitable for burial operations has been developed.

Current Status:

Santa Fe is an open national cemetery. Full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2008. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2030+. (Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Santa Fe N/C had:

21,635	Full-Casket Gravesites Used	2,913	Cremain Sites Used
1,589	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	443	Cremain Sites Available*
281	Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)		

*In addition to cremain sites currently available a review conducted in 1997 of remaining burial areas identified a potential further yield of 9,500 cremain spaces, which should last beyond FY 2030.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 80,100.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	754	11	351
1994	749	7	372
1995	581	6	322
1996	766	7	430
1997	726	9	429

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Santa Fe National Cemetery does not intersect the service areas of any other national or state veterans cemetery.

Expansion Alternatives:

Additional land adjacent to the cemetery is not available for expansion. Shallow depth rock makes more than 20 acres not feasible for casketed gravesites. Additionally, 40 acres acquired from the City of Santa Fe in 1989 contain a ridge which adjacent homeowners want to preserve as their buffer from the highway.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

NCS does not plan to expand full casket capabilities at this cemetery. NCS is working with the State of New Mexico to establish a state veterans cemetery through the State Cemetery Grants Program for the Santa Fe area. The national cemetery will close to full-casket first interments in FY 2008. At that time, NCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of contracting operations and maintenance with the private sector. In-ground cremain sites are available beyond 2030.

Prepared: July, 1998

National Cemetery System (401B/402A)

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery

Historical Brief:

Jefferson Barracks N/C, in St. Louis, Missouri, began burials in the 1820's as a post cemetery. Declared a national cemetery in 1866, remains were consolidated into one burying ground from several battlefield and hospital sites in the area. Jefferson Barracks has been the recipient of ten additional transfers or acquisitions of land since its establishment, mostly from either the present military site or the VAMC. Total area is 331 acres, of which 35 acres remain to be developed for burial operations.

Current Status:

Jefferson Barracks is an open national cemetery. Revised workload projections indicate that full-casket gravesites will be depleted in FY 2010. The national cemetery is expected to deplete its inventory of in-ground cremain spaces in FY 2010.
(Note that all references to "reserved" below address both the AGS and GRS programs.)

At the end of FY 1997, Jefferson Barracks N/C had:

101,094 Full-Casket Gravesites Used	2,356 Cremain Sites Used
21,926 Full-Casket Gravesites Available (non-reserved)	2,391 Cremain Sites Available*
1,151 Full-Casket Gravesites Available (reserved)	

*With the low participation in cremains the cemetery can accommodate any cremain sites needed by using obstructed (due to high incidence of rock) full-casket gravesites.

The veteran population served (75-mile radius) in 1996 was approximately 327,100.

The National Cemetery System, in general, is experiencing increased workload as projected peak years of veteran mortality approach. This trend varies amongst sites, depending on many factors. A five year sampling of interment data show the current trend for this national cemetery:

FY	Full Casket		Cremain
	non-reserved	reserved	
1993	3,201	54	236
1994	3,439	52	262
1995	3,578	53	296
1996	3,431	41	311
1997	3,499	43	364

Proximity To Other Veterans Cemeteries:

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery has a 75-mile service area that intersects the service areas of six other national cemeteries, three of which are fully open for all types of interments. Additionally, an NCS supported state veterans cemetery shares some veteran population coverage. After accounting for service area overlaps, approximately 70% of the veteran population is served exclusively by Jefferson Barracks N/C.

Expansion Alternatives:

There are 35 acres of undeveloped land within the boundaries of the cemetery. Further opportunities for acquiring additional adjacent land do not exist.

Future Plans Concerning This Site:

All available cemetery land will be developed and the appropriate mix of columbaria and in-ground cremation sites evaluated in the planning process. In 2010, Jefferson Barracks will close to full-casket first interments.

APPENDIX E

Areas Identified For Future Evaluation

APPENDIX E

Areas Identified for Future Evaluation

		Veteran Population Affected
Atlanta, GA	+	240,000
Detroit, MI	+	399,500
Miami, FL	+	355,000
Oklahoma City/Lawton, OK	+	130,900
Pittsburgh, PA	+	307,400
Sacramento, CA	+	378,100
St. Louis, MO	+	224,700*

Areas Identified for Re-evaluation

Potential consideration should be given due to closures in the 2004 to 2010 period.

Hampton, VA	+	155,800**
Philadelphia, PA	+	262,850**

* = Replacement for Jefferson Barracks N/C, which has recently acquired land sufficient to provide gravesites through the reporting period.

** = National Cemeteries here have depleted full-casket sites, and will exhaust all cremation sites during the reporting period. Additionally, these sites are in the service areas of other national cemeteries also projected to close during the reporting period, leaving veterans at these locations with no burial option.

APPENDIX F

Data Sources

APPENDIX F

Data Sources of Maps and Charts

Veteran population data (veteran population and death statistics, over time) originate from the National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics, and ultimately the latest national census information.

Production data on number of NCS interments and gravesites used, and the trends/projections extrapolated from these data, find basis in the NCS Burial Operations Support System (BOSS) and the Management and Decision Support System (MADSS). These electronic databases are linked to all national cemeteries, with the collective data compiled and tabulated in the NCS Systems Integration Center (SIC) in Quantico, Virginia.

The geo-mapping system used for this report is "Atlas Select." This system is capable of integrating statistical demographic data and, in addition to presenting visual data points, is an important tool in determining national cemetery geographical impact and service-area veteran populations.



Department of Veterans Affairs

Report On The National Cemetery System

February 1994

This report is prepared in response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec. 412), "Veterans' Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986"

The Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to provide the Congress with this second of two reports on the National Cemetery System in accordance with the provisions of Section 412 of Public Law 99-576, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This is the second of two reports required by Public Law 99-576, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986, which was enacted on October 28, 1986. As required by the law, this report contains the following:

- A plan for the operation of the National Cemetery System (NCS) through the year 2000; a description of anticipated general trends relating to the operation of the National Cemetery System between the years 2000 and 2020; and, a discussion of the provisions of the plan developed in response to these trends.

- A list, in order of priority, of the 10 geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest.

- Assessments of the desirability and feasibility of acquiring certain existing State veterans cemeteries and of the role of State veterans cemeteries in meeting the need for burial space for veterans.

- General plans for any anticipated expansion of the National Cemetery System.

The report also discusses NCS operations generally in terms of veterans served and trends among veterans and families choosing burial at national cemeteries. These trends are used to project cemetery operations, including closings.

The report presents actions planned at selected locations in the United States based on analysis of trends and in keeping with our commitment to provide burial and associated benefits for America's veterans in a fiscally responsible manner.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is divided into three chapters. This chapter provides history and background. Chapter 2 discusses foundation variables that underlie all of the planning for NCS's continued development. Chapter 3 provides an analysis of the data, overall conclusions and actions planned.

Three appendices supply supplemental and explanatory information to assist the reader. The appendices are listed below, and are referred to as needed in the text of the report.

A. Estimated Veteran Population, By Age and Period of Service
B. State Veterans Cemeteries
C. The National Cemeteries of the Department of Veterans Affairs

THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

The NCS is one of three major organizations having missions of direct service to veterans and their families within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the others being the Veterans Health Administration and the Veterans Benefits Administration. On June 18, 1973, the president signed Public Law 93-43, The National Cemeteries Act of 1973. Under the provisions of this Act, 82 national cemeteries, 21 soldiers' lots, seven Confederate cemeteries, three monument sites, and one special installation were transferred from the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Memorial Affairs Agency to the Veterans Administration. These cemeteries and the 21 cemeteries already operated by VA in conjunction with its medical centers were incorporated into the VA National Cemetery System. The mission of the NCS is:

- To bury eligible veterans and their family members in national cemeteries and to maintain those graves and their environs as national shrines;
- To assist states in providing burial benefits to veterans through the State Cemetery Grants program;
- To provide headstones and markers for graves of veterans, wherever those graves are located;
- To provide Presidential Memorial Certificates to next of kin and other loved ones of deceased veterans.

During the period from 1973 to 1987, NCS constructed nine national cemeteries: Calverton, NY; Riverside, CA; Massachusetts; Indiantown Gap, PA; Fort Custer, MI; Quantico, VA; Fort Mitchell, AL; West Virginia; and Florida.

THE 1987 REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

The June 1987 report by the Veterans Administration accomplished several tasks:

- It presented a concise introduction to the National Cemetery System;

- It discussed the national demographic profile of veterans and the effects of the aging population on NCS service in its national cemeteries;

- It reviewed the salient factors that determine the overall effectiveness of the National Cemetery System;

- It identified, in priority order, the 10 areas of the country in which the need for additional burial space for veterans was greatest;

- It discussed the mission and operations of the State Cemetery Grants program, advising against the acquisition by NCS of State veterans cemeteries;

- It presented five recommendations for meeting future burial needs of the nation's veterans.

ACTIVITIES SINCE 1987

The NCS currently operates 114 national cemeteries. At the end of FY 1992, 61 were open to receive full-casketed remains of first family members; 53 were considered "closed," because they no longer have unoccupied full-casket gravesites available for the burial of first family members. Many closed national cemeteries continue burial operations with interments of second family members in already-occupied graves and interments of cremated remains.

Since the publication of the 1987 report, Strategic Plans have been developed with key goals of providing veterans with a full range of burial services and benefits with dignity and honor. The achievements under these goals and continuing strategies are discussed below.

- **Extending the service period of open national cemeteries through the development of available space for casketed and cremated remains.**

In-ground burial sites for cremated remains, cremain spaces or garden niches, are routinely accommodated at nearly all national cemeteries. Expansion of existing cemeteries and development of new cemeteries provide for in-ground cremain spaces whenever possible. The construction of columbaria has not been the most cost-efficient option for interment of cremated remains because of the substantial construction costs compared to development of in-ground space. However, recent evolution of modular columbaria construction techniques has reduced the substantial construction costs of columbaria. As less space is available in national cemeteries for burial of cremated remains, the construction

of columbaria becomes an option for providing cremain space and extending the service life of certain national cemeteries.

- **Acquiring land through purchase or donation to keep existing cemeteries open.**

In a continuing internal analysis process, NCS identifies national cemeteries for which the burial capacity and service period can be extended by the acquisition of adjacent or contiguous land. National cemeteries that will close due to depletion of grave space are analyzed to determine their effectiveness in meeting veterans' burial needs from a national perspective to determine the feasibility of extending the service period of the cemetery. Implementation of plans to acquire land to extend the service period at existing national cemeteries has been accomplished at 15 cemeteries: Dayton, Ohio; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Florence, South Carolina; Ft. Bayard, New Mexico; Ft. Bliss, Texas; Ft. Sam Houston, Texas; Ft. Smith, Arkansas; Little Rock, Arkansas; Mill Springs, Kentucky; Salisbury, North Carolina; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Springfield, Missouri; Rock Island, Illinois; Willamette, Oregon; and Wood, Wisconsin. Additional parcels of land may be acquired at some of these cemeteries to further extend the service period.

- **Encouraging States to provide additional gravesites for veterans through participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program.**

Through the State Cemetery Grants program, NCS provides up to one-half of the funds needed to establish, expand or improve state-owned cemeteries for veterans in areas not currently served by national cemeteries. The capacity of this program to expand and improve has increased since publication of the 1987 report, and NCS has increased its efforts to encourage participation by the States.

Tennessee, Maryland, Hawaii and Vermont represent recent success stories for the program. The State Cemetery Grants Program had a particularly positive impact in Tennessee, where State veterans cemeteries were opened in Knoxville in 1990, in Memphis in 1992, and in Nashville in 1993, offsetting the negative impact of the closures of the national cemeteries in those cities. Maryland and Hawaii have built a network of State veterans cemeteries with assistance from the grant program. In addition, Vermont opened a State veterans cemetery in 1993.

- **Establishing, when feasible, new national cemeteries to serve the interment needs of the aging veteran population.**

The National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona was transferred from the State to the NCS by Public Law 100-322 in 1988. In 1992, San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery opened to serve veterans in northern California. Located in one of the 10 areas identified in the 1987 Report to Congress, it will provide service well into the twenty-first century with over 60,000 available gravesites. NCS is also moving forward with plans to serve the interment needs of veterans in the other areas identified in the 1987 report. Environmental Impact Statements have been completed for national cemeteries to serve veterans in the Albany, Cleveland, Seattle, Chicago and Dallas/Ft. Worth metropolitan areas. Land acquisition is in process, and these cemeteries are projected to be operational before the end of the decade. Long range task schedules have also been drafted for the potential development of new national cemeteries in the remaining four major metropolitan areas named in the 1987 report.

1987 Report Recommendations

A five-point plan was proposed in the 1987 report:

Recommendation 1. Limited expansion of existing national cemeteries.

Cemeteries are considered closed when no more full-casket gravesites are available. NCS strives to keep its active cemeteries open longer by extending their burial capacity and service period. These expansions are important because extending the longevity of an open cemetery is less costly than establishing a new cemetery in the vicinity.

The 1987 report recommended, and the NCS Strategic Plan proposes, that a number of cemeteries, currently open, extend their operational periods by acquiring land contiguous to the cemeteries. A 1992 NCS internal review on potential cemetery expansion recommended that consideration be given to further development of 19 existing national cemeteries.

Recommendation 2. Phased development of presently undeveloped land in open national cemeteries.

Phased development in ten-year increments is a part of the routine operation of an open national cemetery. It is the practice within NCS to lay out and subdivide a cemetery by sections or areas so that it may be developed sequentially as the need approaches.

Recommendation 3. Expansion of the garden niche concept.

Garden niches are small burial sites, suitable for the interment of cremated remains, that are arranged in ways that help preserve the tranquillity and integrity of the cemetery's plan for peaceful beauty. Garden niches are often found near pathways or along stretches of landscaped ground whose slope or configuration precludes the burial of caskets.

There has been progress in implementing this recommendation in NCS's national cemeteries. At the new San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery and at Riverside National Cemetery, both located in California, NCS has erected a series of landscaped terraces devoted to garden niches. At Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Francisco, garden niches are located close to the cemetery's pathways. Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon contains sections of ground quite suitable for garden niches. Each national cemetery has been considered for development of garden niches and many national cemeteries have been enhanced by their addition.

The use of garden niches provides a greater choice of services, often allows continued service at closed national cemeteries and accommodates a current trend in burial customs.

Recommendation 4: Encourage expanded participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program.

In reviewing the State Cemetery Grants Program, the 1987 report stated ". . . it is not desirable nor advisable for the Federal Government to acquire existing State veterans cemeteries for incorporation into the National Cemetery System." The report further cited that "expansion of the National Cemetery System . . . has been with clearly defined objectives to meet veterans' burial needs from a national perspective."

States that wish to recognize and honor their veterans by providing burial space within a reasonable distance from their homes voluntarily establish state veterans cemeteries without regard to a national perspective. Permitting States to establish cemeteries at locations of their choice for future incorporation into the National Cemetery System circumvents the intent of the State Cemetery Grants Program and would result in random expansion of the NCS without centralized planning.

A significant financial burden would be shifted to the Federal Government if NCS were to acquire State veterans cemeteries during the present budget constraints. Acquiring closed state facilities would not further NCS objectives and

selective acquisition of State veterans cemeteries would undermine the cooperative nature of the State Cemetery Grants Program.

NCS and the State Cemetery Grants Program are autonomous in their origins, authority, objectives and operations. Although they share the goal of providing burial space to veterans they are separate and this autonomy should be retained.

State veterans cemeteries are an important segment of the services offered to veterans. There remains a need for an array of state veterans cemeteries to complement the national cemeteries operated by NCS.

Recommendation 5. Establish policy related to the future physical development of the National Cemetery System.

The Regional Concept, under which one large NCS cemetery was identified or developed in each of the 10 Standard Federal Regions and the Washington, D.C. area, provided the framework for NCS national cemetery development from 1974 to 1987. The Regional Concept was achieved with the establishment of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, Alabama, in 1987.

The 1987 report identified ten geographic areas in which the need for additional burial space for veterans is greatest. This list became the basis for planning future development of national cemeteries. Since 1987, significant progress has been made against that list: San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery opened; preferred sites have been identified for 5 of the geographic areas; and, Environmental Impact Statements for the remaining 4 are under way.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYTICAL FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

General

Analysis of the burial needs of the nation's veterans forms the foundation of all plans for the development of the National Cemetery System. This analysis requires considerable care because of the important variables involved.

- A migrating U.S. population and a veteran population that is migrating as well. The populations of some states and regions are shrinking while others are growing.
- The changing longevity of the U.S. population. Veterans' mortality rates are not the same now as they were in 1975, and will not be the same in 2040 as today.
- Cultural and family traditions in the midst of change:
  - → Families have been reluctant to bury loved ones in neighboring states;
  - → Once a practice common primarily in the western United States, cremations now account for an increasing percentage of the interments throughout the country;
  - → Fewer Americans are purchasing and using family plots in hometown cemeteries. It is assumed that this is the result of ever-increasing mobility in the populace, as people no longer consider any one locale the focus of family history and tradition.

These variables present analytical challenges that must be accommodated in logical, concrete ways. This chapter describes these variables and other important considerations.

NCS SERVICE OBJECTIVES

In the 1987 report, National Cemetery System Service Areas were identified as Primary Service Areas (PSAs) and Secondary Service Areas (SSAs). The PSA comprised the area within 50 miles of the cemetery, while the SSA was the area outside of the PSA but within 100 miles of the cemetery. However, NCS data has shown that beyond 75 miles from the cemetery, usage drops off dramatically.

Therefore, since April 1990, the Service Area for state and national veterans cemeteries has been redefined as the area within 75 miles of the cemetery.

CEMETERIES OPERATED BY OTHERS

The Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense also operate national cemeteries throughout the United States, many of which are historically significant. However, only two Interior cemeteries are open for burials, and accomplish few burials each year. Arlington National Cemetery, where burial is limited to a small population that meets strict eligibility requirements, had 4,435 interments during 1992. The activities of these cemeteries are not included in the planning within the National Cemetery System.

ASSUMPTIONS

Much of what is projected for the future is based on a prediction of sameness or on the expectation that actions already begun will continue to completion. The general and stabilizing assumptions are listed.

- The United States will remain in a "no-war" or limited-conflict situation.
- No catastrophic disaster or epidemic will occur.
- No major legislative changes will occur that affect veterans' burial benefits.
- Present socioeconomic and employment conditions will remain relatively unchanged.

DATA SOURCES AND DATA USE

This is a project of numbers, of quantities. Some of the numbers are concrete, reliable, and have precise origins. Others are deduced, inferred, projected, or estimated. The data used in this analysis are described below.

Veteran population and demographics

In developing a profile of the veterans who are interred in national cemeteries, it is necessary to review and project information on their ages, periods of service, and geographic concentrations. These factors are all of special interest in the process of national cemetery planning because they affect NCS's ability to serve veterans.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, we present an overview of the methodologies related to the five most important variables considered in our analysis.

Veteran Population

National estimates and projections of the veteran population have been generated using the 1980 decennial census data by age, sex, and period of military service. Annual separations from the armed forces are added incrementally to this base figure and annual projected deaths are subtracted. The resultant figure becomes the base for the next year's estimate. The computation is repeated for each year through 2040. The population is then distributed to state and county levels. Interstate migration rates are applied to the population data at the state level.

Military Separations

Military separations (discharges and retirements) are important for the computation of the veteran population because annual separations add to the population continuously. The Defense Manpower Data Center of DOD has provided historical information on separation from the armed forces for the period 1980 through 1990. Future projections of annual separations are based on the average number (and geographic distribution) of military separations occurring during the most recent 3-year period.

The Department of Defense (DOD) is reducing the size of U.S. military forces, with a projected reduction from 2,069,357 in FY 1990 to 1,626,300 by FY 1997. However, the effect of this force reduction on NCS workload in the national cemeteries is expected to be insignificant and is not incorporated in this analysis.

Mortality Rates

Veteran deaths are calculated using survival rates. Since no survival rates based on the survival experience specific to veterans are available, the VA model uses survival rates for white males and white females obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics of the Bureau of the Census. Studies have shown the mortality rate for veterans to be generally lower than that of the general population. (This "healthy worker" effect is postulated to be the result of the mental and physical screening that takes place during entrance into the armed forces.)

Migration Factors

Estimates of net civilian internal migration, the estimated migration among states, begin with data from the 1980 decennial census. A veteran migration rate is then derived, based on the relationship between the veteran population and the general population. Rather than rely solely on the 1980 census, however, VA analysts produced new estimates of veteran populations by state based on more recent population data provided by the Bureau of the Census and other Government agencies. The veteran migration rate derived earlier is then applied to these updated estimates of general population movement.

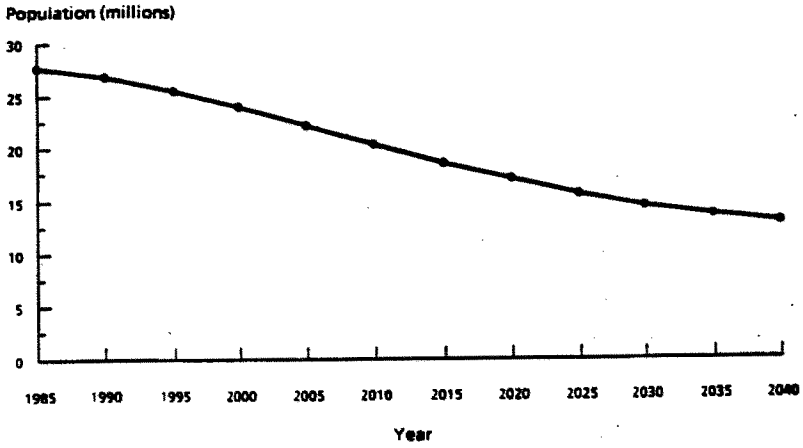
Population Estimates

The 1987 report identified population areas using a radius of 100 miles. If any portion of a county fell within the 100 mile radius, all veterans within that county were counted, even if they actually resided further than 100 miles from the geographic center.

This analysis uses a more realistic service area with a 75-mile radius. The geographic populations were developed using the "zip code centroid" method of population analysis. This method was used to determine veteran population in major metropolitan areas. This method replaces the method used in the previous report, and is considered to be more accurate. The "zip code centroid" method accounts for both the size and population distribution of each county, and is an improvement on the accuracy of the earlier estimates as only the veterans living within the 75-mile radius of the geographic center are counted. This technique is possible only in conjunction with recent advances in computing power and a steady improvement in the capabilities of geographic mapping software.

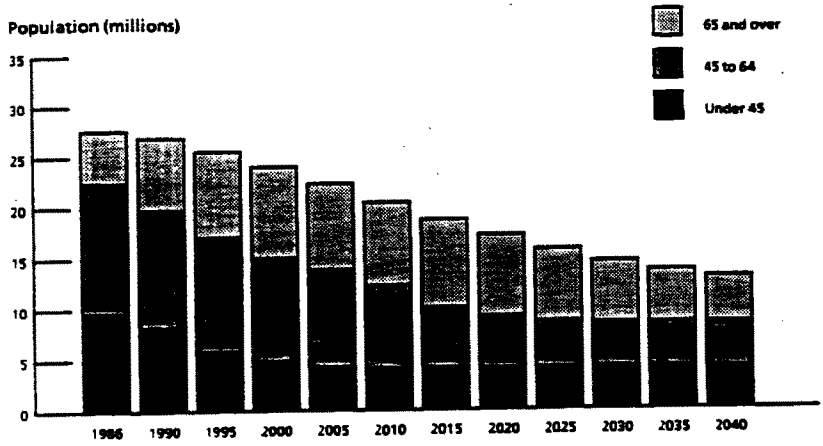
VETERAN POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In 1987, the Department of Veterans Affairs reported a total veteran population in the United States and Puerto Rico of 27,700,000. By 1992, that population had fallen to 26,981,000. That attrition is the result of veterans' deaths annually exceeding the number of new veterans separating from military service. Figure 2-1 projects the veteran population through 2040.



U.S. Veteran Population
Figure 2-1

Another perspective is the trend in the aging of veterans as shown in Figure 2-2. The veteran population 65 years old and over peaks in the year 2000. On a percentage basis, however, those 65 years and over account for only 26 percent of all veterans in 1990, while in 2015 they account for almost half of all veterans. Their share of the total veteran population then begins to drop until, by the year 2040, they account for only 34 percent of all veterans.



The Aging Veteran Population
Figure 2-2

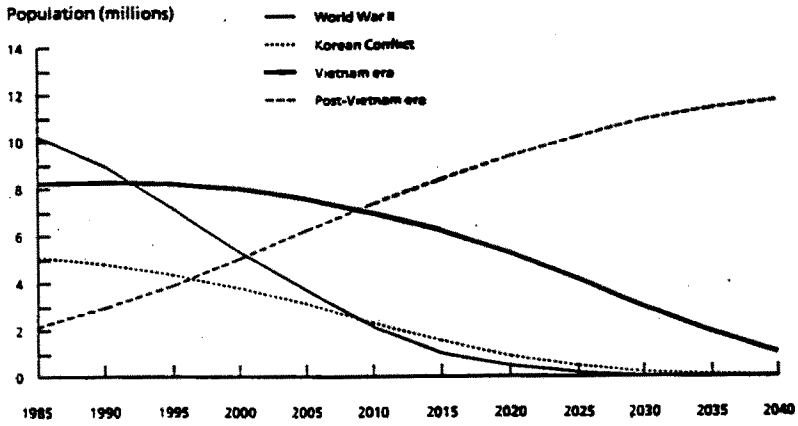
The most important aspect of the aging trends is that the median age of World War II veterans is about 70 years. This population group, who make up the largest single segment of the veteran population, now places the greatest demand on the operations of the National Cemetery System. This surge in mortality will be followed closely by another from the Korean Conflict veterans, whose median age now approaches 62 years

Veteran Age Profiles and Period of Service

Veteran age, period of service, and mortality and cemetery usage rates are important variables to consider when planning for cemetery operations. Older veterans require increasing levels of service from VA, culminating in the services of the NCS.

Currently, World War II and Vietnam era veterans each comprise about 31 percent of the U.S. veteran population. Korean Conflict veterans account for another 17 percent. The remainder fall predominately into the category of peacetime veterans, most of whom are post-Vietnam era veterans. Appendix A gives a detailed listing of the veteran population by principal period of military service.

In 1992, the median age of World War II veterans was 70.32 years; Korean Conflict veterans' median age was 61.76 years; and, Vietnam era veterans' median age was 45.64 years. As shown in Figure 2-3, only the population of post-Vietnam era veterans grows in the coming years.



Veterans Identified with Selected Periods of Service
Figure 2-3

Table 2-1 displays the U.S. veteran population by year and projects the median age in each of those years. The veteran population will decline from 27,683,000 in 1990 to 20,397,000 in 2010, a 26 percent decrease. Median age of the surviving veterans increases from 55.1 years in 1990 to a high of 62.9 years in 2015, and then decreases to 55.6 by 2040. These trends are consistent with data previously discussed in this chapter.

Estimated U.S. Veteran Population
(in 5-year increments)

Year	Veteran Population	Median Age
1990	27,683,000	55.1
1995	26,881,000	56.6
2000	25,578,000	58.3
2005	22,228,000	60.3
2010	20,397,000	60.9
2015	18,614,000	62.9
2020	17,004,000	62.5
2025	15,628,000	61.2
2030	14,493,000	59.1
2035	13,604,000	57.5
2040	12,962,000	55.6

Table 2-1

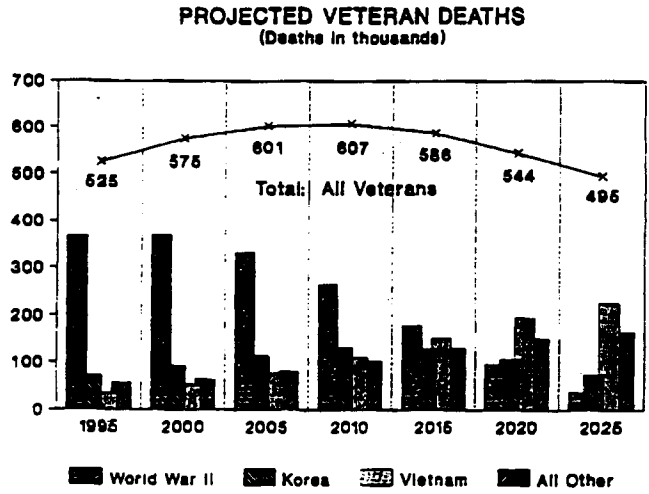
Table 2-2 shows the projected deaths of veterans through 2040. During the period 1990 to 2010, annual veterans' projected deaths will grow from 463,000 to a peak of 607,000, an increase of 31 percent, and thereafter will decrease annually to about 350,000 in 2040.

Projected U.S. Veteran Deaths

Year	Veteran Deaths
1990	463,000
1995	525,000
2000	575,000
2005	601,000
2010	607,000
2015	586,000
2020	544,000
2025	495,000
2030	447,000
2035	395,000
2040	349,000

Table 2-2

Figure 2-4 shows the projected deaths of veterans from 1995 through 2025, and the proportion of veteran deaths by period of service. World War II veteran deaths are predominant through 2010, and then become a much smaller portion of total veteran deaths. Vietnam War veteran deaths continue to increase, becoming more significant as those veterans continue to age. NCS data shows that Vietnam War veterans are twice as likely to use the services of the NCS than veterans of any other period of service.



U S Veterans' Deaths
Figure 2-4

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND ACTIONS PLANNED

The World War II veteran population is entering its peak years of need; at the same time, more national cemeteries are closing. About 60.5 percent of our nation's veterans live within 75 miles of an open national or State veterans cemetery. If no new national cemeteries are constructed by the year 2000, the percentage of veterans living within 75 miles of an open national or State veterans cemetery will drop to 55.4 percent.

CLOSURES

In 1992, 53 of the 114 national cemeteries were closed to interment of full-casketed remains of first family members. The national cemeteries in Nashville, TN and Hampton, VA closed in 1993. Before the year 2000, nine more cemeteries are expected to fill and will close, bringing the total closed to 64. Nine additional cemeteries are projected to close between the year 2000 and 2010.

Name	Projected Closing Date (fiscal year)
Alexandria, LA	1994
Quincy, IL	1994
Florence, SC	1995
Wood, WI	1995
Natchez, MS	1998
Dayton, OH	1998
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	1998
Springfield, MO	1999
Woodlawn, NY	1999
Salisbury, NC	2000
Camp Butler, IL	2000
Little Rock, AR	2000
Biloxi, MS	2001
Ft. Gibson, OK	2005
Barrancas, FL	2005
Ft. Bliss, TX	2005
Jefferson Barracks, MO	2006
Beaufort, SC	2010

As these cemeteries close, if no replacement burial sites are created, the estimated veteran population served within 75 miles of the veteran's home will be considerably reduced. In some cases, open State veterans cemeteries could reduce the negative impact of the closing of a national cemetery. For example, the adverse effect of the closures of the NCS national cemeteries in Knoxville in 1990, Memphis in 1992, and Nashville in 1993, was neutralized when the State of Tennessee opened three State veterans cemeteries with the aid of the State Cemetery Grants Program. Those three cemeteries will adequately serve the veterans of Tennessee beyond 2040. The Federal government cannot rely upon the States to open State veterans cemeteries to compensate for all national cemetery closures. In other cases, NCS may be able to extend the service life of open national cemeteries through the acquisition and development of contiguous land.

EXPANSION OF EXISTING CEMETERIES

As part of the planning process, NCS considers the acquisition of contiguous land either through purchase, donation, or transfer from another federal facility. By postponing the closings of existing national cemeteries, NCS is able to continue to provide service to a greater number of veterans without building new cemeteries. The expansion of existing cemeteries through the acquisition and development of contiguous land is a proven cost effective method of providing cemetery services for veterans. These acquisitions often entail a lengthy legal process, and may take several years to complete.

In 1992, NCS conducted an internal review of 75 cemeteries that were either closed or expected to close prior to 2015. The purpose of the review was to determine the potential to further develop and extend the service period of existing national cemeteries. There were 19 open cemeteries with contiguous undeveloped land, and acquisition of contiguous undeveloped land was already in process at ten of these cemeteries. At 47 cemeteries, no contiguous undeveloped land was identified. The remaining nine cemeteries were closed and will remain closed.

At the four cemeteries listed below, suitable land contiguous to the existing cemetery is available for annexation and acquisition is being pursued. These four cemeteries serve a significant number of veterans, and expansion would provide service for these veterans for a number of years to come. If these four cemeteries are expanded, NCS will be able to continue to provide service to veterans living in these areas.

Name	Potential Expansion Acreage	Closing Date Present	Projected
Florence, SC	15	1995	2015
Dayton, OH	17	1998	2013
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	43	1998	2012
Biloxi, MS	13	2001	2015

AREAS WITH GREATEST NEED FOR BURIAL SPACE

As cemeteries become filled and close, veterans served by those cemeteries lose access to burial space located within a reasonable distance of their homes. Even with participation by States in the State Cemetery Grants Program and the expansion of already existing open cemeteries, large numbers of veterans living in metropolitan areas of the United States are without an open national or State veterans cemetery within 75 miles of their home.

Ten geographic areas have been identified, in order of priority, where a significant number of veterans reside within a 75-mile radius, and where these veterans are not reasonably served by an existing open national or State veterans cemetery. This updated list differs from the list identified in the 1987 report. This difference is a result of using the zip code centroid method of population analysis and the 75 mile radius, as described earlier in this report.

Listed below are the ten geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest.

Location	Veterans Served (1996 Estimated Veteran Population)
1. Chicago, IL	991,400
2. Detroit, MI	605,000
3. Cleveland, OH	538,200
4. Dallas/Fort Worth, TX	484,100
5. Sacramento, CA	478,900
6. Miami, FL	471,500
7. Atlanta, GA	409,800
8. Seattle, WA	383,100
9. St. Louis, MO	279,600
10. Albany, NY	227,600

CONCLUSIONS

The veteran population is aging, and veteran deaths will reach their annual peak in about 15 years. The nature and the structure of this nation's veterans cemeteries for many years into the future will be determined by decisions made in the next few years.

Reaffirm 1987 Report Recommendations

The five-point plan proposed in the 1987 report included recommendations which remain valid for consideration in planning to meet the needs of America's veterans.

Expansion of Existing Cemeteries

By expanding open national cemeteries, the need for new cemeteries can be significantly reduced or postponed. Expanding open cemeteries with high interment rates will pay the greatest dividend in numbers of veterans served. The interment rates of these cemeteries are such that large parcels of contiguous land are needed to prolong their longevity for time periods equivalent to expansions of cemeteries with lower interment rates.

State Veterans Cemeteries

State veterans cemeteries are important partners with NCS national cemeteries. They now present attractive opportunities for continued development of a mixed network of state and national veterans cemeteries. Consistent with the finding and rationale of the 1987 report, however, this analysis advises against acquisition by NCS of State veterans cemeteries. In the years ahead, many NCS national cemeteries will fill and close, having reached their maximum capacities through land acquisition and expansion. Replacement cemeteries will be sought to serve steadily declining numbers of U.S. veterans. In this atmosphere, state veterans cemeteries will become even more attractive replacement candidates. This is especially true in areas with medium to small veteran populations. The costs of land acquisition involved in establishing and maintaining cemeteries in the largest metropolitan areas would probably be prohibitive for the States.

Establishment of New National Cemeteries

By establishing new national cemeteries in a fiscally responsible manner, in conjunction with the expansion of existing national cemeteries and the development of state veterans cemeteries, NCS will be able to shorten the gap created as the World War II veteran population enters its peak years of need while exisiting national cemeteries are closing.

ACTIONS PLANNED

Action 1

Reaffirm and continue to implement the 1987 recommendations, as described in Chapter 1 of this report.

Action 2

Complete the initiatives already begun to extend the service period at the following open national cemeteries:

- Biloxi National Cemetery, Mississippi
- Dayton National Cemetery, Ohio
- Florence National Cemetery, South Carolina
- Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, Texas

Continue to explore this potential at other national cemeteries projected to close after 2000.

Action 3

Explore the development of options to make the Federal/State partnership more attractive to increase State participation. Actively pursue opportunities to enlist States in the State Cemetery Grants Program.

Action 4

Continue to plan and proceed with establishment of new NCS national cemeteries. This report has identified the ten geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is the greatest. The establishment of State veterans cemeteries in these areas is not feasible because of the costs in establishing and maintaining cemeteries in large metropolitan areas.

New national cemeteries, for which Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) have been completed, preferred sites have been identified, and some funding has already been approved for site acquisition and master planning could be available to provide service to veterans prior to 2000 in the following locations:

Geographic Area		Preferred Site
Albany, NY		Saratoga Battlefield
Cleveland, OH		Guilford Township
Seattle, WA		Tahoma
Chicago, IL	Considering 3 sites:	Joliet Arsenal
		Grant Park
		Cissna Park
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX		Mountain Creek

Negotiations are progressing between VA and the respective land owners to acquire land at four of the five sites. Once a Record of Decision is issued for the Chicago area, VA will take the necessary steps to acquire the land at the identified site.

Continue to plan to provide service through the development and establishment of new cemeteries for veterans at the following locations, listed in alphabetical order:

Atlanta, GA
Detroit, MI
Miami, FL
Oklahoma City, OK
Pittsburgh, PA
Sacramento, CA
St. Louis, MO

Oklahoma City and Pittsburgh were identified in the 1987 Report to Congress. Based on current demographic data, these areas are not on the list of 10 geographic areas most in need. However, in the time since the release of the 1987 report, Congress has earmarked funding for advance planning and completion of EISs at these sites. VA has proceeded with EIS contracts and plans to include these areas in the NCS planning process for future consideration.

PROJECTED COSTS

Based on previous studies and background analysis, NCS staff has determined that costs range from $10-12 million for the planning, acquisition of land and construction of a new national cemetery. This does not include initial nor recurring annual operating costs. Annual recurring operating costs range from $1-2 million depending on size and geographic location, number of burials performed and staff needed to run the cemetery effectively.

A representative estimate provides for flexibility in the design of each cemetery, and accounts for differences in land acquisition and construction costs that vary throughout the country. These factors make it virtually impossible to determine a firm average cost to build and establish a new cemetery.

SUMMARY

The U.S. veteran population is aging, and veteran deaths are projected to reach their annual peak in the year 2010. The National Cemetery System has the opportunity to fulfill our nation's obligation to serve its veterans by meeting their final needs with compassion and dignity. Planning that is done now will affect the nature and structure of this nation's veterans cemeteries for many years into the future. NCS has adopted four overall strategies to achieve its goal of providing veterans with a full range of burial services with dignity and honor:

- Extending the service period of open national cemeteries through the development of available space for casketed and cremated remains;
- Acquiring land through purchase or donation to keep existing cemeteries open;
- Encouraging States to provide additional gravesites for veterans through participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program;
- Establishing, when feasible, new national cemeteries to serve the interment needs of the aging veteran population.

This report provides the NCS with a tentative plan of action for servicing the needs of the Nation's veterans and provides analysis which may be used by NCS in its decision and policy-making process. The plan does not represent a commitment to any particular action, however, since various additional factors such as shifting demographics and availability of resources could affect the development or construction of new or existing cemeteries at any or all of the sites.

APPENDIX A

ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO BY AGE AND PERIOD OF SERVICE
(In thousands, as of July 1992)

PERIOD OF SERVICE

AGE GROUP	TOTAL	TOTAL WAR	TOTAL PERSIAN GULF WAR	PERSIAN GULF WAR NO PRIOR WARTIME SERVICE	PERSIAN GULF WAR AND VIETNAM ERA ONLY	PERSIAN GULF WAR VIETNAM ERA AND KOREAN CONFLICT	TOTAL VIETNAM ERA	VIETNAM ERA NO PRIOR WARTIME SERVICE	VIETNAM ERA AND KOREAN CONFLICT ONLY	VIETNAM ERA KOREAN CONFLICT AND WORLD WAR II	TOTAL KOREAN CONFLICT	KOREAN CONFLICT NO PRIOR WARTIME SERVICE	KOREAN CONFLICT AND WORLD WAR II	TOTAL WORLD WAR II	WORLD WAR II ONLY	WORLD WAR I	TOTAL PEACETIME	SERVICE BETWEEN KOREAN CONFLICT AND VIETNAM ERA ONLY	POST-VIETNAM TO AUGUST 1990	POST-PERSIAN GULF WAR	OTHER PEACETIME
17 - 19	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 - 24	395	236	236	236	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	159	0	159	0	0
25 - 29	995	199	199	199	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	796	0	796	0	0
30 - 34	1,390	153	96	96	0	0	57	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,237	0	1,237	0	0
35 - 39	1,692	1,033	60	39	21	0	994	994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	658	0	658	0	0
40 - 44	2,893	2,750	75	18	57	0	2,732	2,732	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	143	9	134	0	0
45 - 49	3,205	2,837	39	14	25	0	2,823	2,823	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	367	325	41	0	1
50 - 54	2,403	974	14	7	7	0	908	899	9	0	69	69	0	0	0	0	1,428	1,403	22	0	3
55 - 59	2,731	1,654	5	4	1	0	316	169	148	0	1,481	1,481	0	0	0	0	1,077	1,044	11	0	22
60 - 64	3,196	3,015	1	1	0	0	237	31	151	54	2,390	2,216	174	767	593	0	181	106	2	0	72
65 - 69	3,509	3,480	0	0	0	0	115	9	8	98	500	161	339	3,311	2,971	0	29	11	0	0	18
70 - 74	2,769	2,752	0	0	0	0	70	4	1	65	230	19	211	2,729	2,518	0	18	5	0	0	13
75 - 79	1,201	1,177	0	0	0	0	21	*	1	20	82	8	74	1,169	1,095	0	23	3	0	0	20
80 - 84	426	406	0	0	0	0	4	0	*	4	23	4	20	404	384	1	18	2	0	0	17
85+	172	156	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7	2	6	121	115	33	17	1	0	0	15
65+	8,078	7,973	0	0	0	0	211	13	10	187	842	193	649	7,733	7,083	34	105	22	0	0	83
Median	58	61	28	27	43	0	46	45	60	68	62	61	69	70	71	90	46	54	32	0	64
TOTAL	29,991	29,826	730	818	111	0	8,278	7,718	318	242	4,782	3,958	823	8,500	7,676	34	8,153	2,911	3,080	0	181

NOTE: Detail may not add to total shown due to rounding. "Total War" equals the sum of Persian Gulf War (No Prior Wartime Service), Vietnam Era (No Prior Wartime Service), Korean Conflict (No Prior Wartime Service), Total World War II, and World War I. "Other Peacetime" is comprised of veterans who served only between World War I and World War II, and those who served only between World War II and the Korean Conflict. These data exclude Post-Vietnam Era veterans who entered the active Armed Forces after September 7, 1980, and failed to satisfy the minimum service requirement (usually two years).

* Less than 1

APPENDIX B

STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES
AS OF END OF FY 1992

State	Cemetery	Location	Status	VA Grant
California	Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Yountville	Closed	No
Colorado	Colorado State Veterans Cemetery	Homelake	Open	No
Connecticut	Colonel Raymond F. Gates Memorial Cemetery	Rocky Hill	Open	No
Connecticut	Spring Grove Veterans Cemetery	Darien	Closed	No
Connecticut	Middletown Veterans Cemetery	Rocky Hill	Open	Yes
Delaware	Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Bear	Open	Yes
Hawaii	Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery	Kaneohe	Open	Yes
Hawaii	Hawaii Veterans Cemetery - Area I	Hilo	Open	No
Hawaii	Hawaii Veterans Cemetery - Area II	Hilo	Open	Yes
Hawaii	Kauai Veterans Cemetery	Lihue	Open	Yes
Hawaii	Maui Veterans Cemetery	Makawao	Open	No
Hawaii	Hoolehua Veterans Cemetery (Molokai)	Kauna Kakai	Open	No
Illinois	Sunset Cemetery	Quincy	Open	Yes

APPENDIX B

STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES (Continued)

State	Cemetery	Location	Status	VA Grant
Indiana	Indiana State Soldiers Home Cemetery	West Lafayette	Open	No
Iowa	Iowa Veterans Home and Cemetery	Marshalltown	Open	No
Kansas	Kansas Soldiers Home Cemetery	Fort Dodge	Open	No
Maine	Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Augusta	Open	Yes
Maryland	Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery	Cheltenham	Open	Yes
Maryland	Crownsville Veterans Cemetery	Crownsville	Open	Yes
Maryland	Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery	Hurlock	Open	Yes
Maryland	Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery	Owings Mills	Open	Yes
Maryland	Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery	Flintstone	Open	Yes
Missouri	Missouri Veterans Home Cemetery	St. James	Open	No
Montana	State Veterans Cemetery	Helena	Open	Yes
Montana	Montana Veterans Home Cemetery	Columbia Falls	Open	No
Nebraska	Nebraska Veterans Homes Cemetery	Grand Island	Open	No

APPENDIX B

STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES (Continued)

State	Cemetery	Location	Status	VA Grant
Nevada	Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Fernley	Open	Yes
Nevada	Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Boulder City	Open	Yes
New Jersey	Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery	Wrightstown	Open	Yes
New Jersey	New Jersey Memorial Home Cemetery	Vineland	Closed	No
North Dakota	North Dakota Veterans Cemetery	Bismarck	Open	No
Oklahoma	Oklahoma Veterans Cemetery	Oklahoma city	Open	No
Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania Soldiers and Sailors Home Cemetery	Erie	Open	Yes
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery	Exeter	Open	Yes
South Dakota	South Dakota Veterans Home Cemetery	Hot Springs	Open	No
Tennessee	Knoxville State Veterans Cemetery	Knoxville	Open	Yes
Tennessee	West Tennessee Veterans Cemetery	Memphis	Open	Yes
Utah	Utah State Veterans Cemetery	Bluffdale	Open	Yes
Vermont	Vermont Veterans Home War Memorial Cemetery	Bennington	Open	No

APPENDIX B

STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES (Continued)

State	Cemetery	Location	Status	VA Grant
Washington	Washington Home Colony and Cemetery	Orting	Open	No
Washington	Washington Veterans Home Cemetery	Retsil	Open	No
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery	King	Open	Yes
Wyoming	Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery	Evansville	Open	Yes
Guam	Guam Veterans Cemetery	Agana	Open	Yes

APPENDIX C-1

OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES OF NCS AS OF END OF FY 1992

Atlanta - NCAO (47 Cemeteries)	Philadelphia - NCAO (40 Cemeteries)	Denver - NCAO (27 Cemeteries)
Alexandria, Louisiana Barrancas, Florida Beaufort, South Carolina Biloxi, Mississippi Camp Nelson, Kentucky Chattanooga, Tennessee Corinth, Mississippi Fayetteville, Arkansas Florence, South Carolina Florida, Florida Ft. Gibson, Oklahoma Ft. Mitchell, Alabama Ft. Sam Houston, Texas Ft. Smith, Arkansas Houston, Texas Jefferson Barracks, Missouri Lebanon, Kentucky Little Rock, Arkansas Mill Springs, Kentucky Mound City, Illinois Mountain Home, Tennessee Nashville, Tennessee Natchez, Mississippi Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico Salisbury, North Carolina Springfield, Missouri	Bath, New York Calverton, New York Camp Butler, Illinois Culpeper, Virginia Danville, Illinois Dayton, Ohio Ft. Custer, Michigan Hampton, Virginia Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania Keokuk, Iowa Marion, Indiana Massachusetts, Massachusetts Quantico, Virginia Quincy, Illinois Rock Island, Illinois West Virginia, West Virginia Wood, Wisconsin Woodlawn, New York	Black Hills, South Dakota Eagle Point, Oregon Ft. Bayard, New Mexico Ft. Bliss, Texas Ft. Logan, Colorado Ft. Lyon, Colorado Ft. McPherson, Nebraska Ft. Richardson, Alaska Ft. Scott, Kansas Ft. Snelling, Minnesota Leavenworth, Kansas NMCA, Arizona[1] Riverside, California San Joaquin, California Santa Fe, New Mexico Sitka, Arkansas Willamette, Oregon
Total Open		
26	18	17

[1]National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona

Appendix C-2

CLOSED NATIONAL CEMETERIES OF NCS
AS OF END OF FY 1992

Atlanta - NCAO	Philadelphia - NCAO	Denver - NCAO
Alton, Illinois Baton Rouge, Louisiana Bay Pines, Florida Cave Hill, Kentucky Danville, Kentucky Danville, Virginia Jefferson City, Missouri Kerrville, Texas Knoxville, Tennessee Lexington, Kentucky Marietta, Georgia Memphis, Tennessee Mobile, Alabama New Albany, Indiana New Bern, North Carolina Port Hudson, Louisiana Raleigh, North Carolina San Antonio, Texas St. Augustine, Florida Wilmington, North Carolina Zachary Taylor, Kentucky	Alexandria, Virginia Annapolis, Maryland Balls Bluff, Virginia Baltimore, Maryland Beverly, New Jersey City Point, Virginia Cold Harbor, Virginia Crown Hill, Indiana Cypress Hills, New York Finn's Point, New Jersey Ft Harrison, Virginia Glendale, Virginia Grafton, West Virginia Hampton (VAC), Virginia[1] Long Island, New York Loudon Park, Maryland Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Richmond, Virginia Seven Pines, Virginia Staunton, Virginia Togus, Maine Wincnester, Virginia	Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas Ft. Meade, South Dakota Ft. Rosecrans, California Golden Gate, California Hot Springs, South Dakota Los Angeles, California NMCP, Hawaii[2] Prescott, Arizona Roseburg, Oregon San Francisco, California
Total Closed		
21	22	10

[1]Department of Veterans Affairs Center
[2]National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific

Veterans Administration

Report On The National Cemetery System

This report is prepared in response to Public Law 99-576 (Sec.412), "Veterans' Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986".

Veterans Administration
Department of Memorial Affairs

June 1987

FOREWORD

The Veterans Administration is pleased to provide to the Congress a Report on the National Cemetery System in accordance with the provisions of Section 412 of Public Law 99-576.

The report objectively addresses Congress' requirements reflected in Public Law 99-576. It identifies ten geographic areas in which the need for additional burial space for veterans is greatest. However, the results of the study are not to be considered as a change to administration policy regarding the "Regional Cemetery Concept." Further development of the National Cemetery System would not be in conformance with this established policy. Although areas of need are identified, this report does not establish or propose a policy change for further expansion through construction of cemeteries at these locations. The report, however, does propose a policy review to be conducted to evaluate the current policy and other policy options.

The objective of the policy review would be to ensure that the Veterans Administration is responsive to the burial needs of the veteran population.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the National Cemetery System:

The National Cemetery System comprises 110 operating national cemeteries; 45 are closed and 65 are open for the interment of first family members. National cemeteries are located in 38 States and Puerto Rico. Two new national cemeteries are under construction: West Virginia near Grafton, West Virginia; and Florida in Central Florida (Fort Mitchell at Phenix City, Alabama was just opened in May 1987). In addition, environmental studies and preparation of a Master Plan are underway for establishing a new national cemetery in Northern California.

Expansion of the National Cemetery System since 1973 has been under the regional concept which provides for one large cemetery in each of the ten Standard Federal Regions and one in the Washington, D.C. area. Four existing facilities were designated as regional cemeteries and 6 new regional cemeteries were constructed. Construction of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery will complete expansion of the system under the regional concept. The National Cemetery System is effective in the delivery of burial benefits and presently almost 70% of the veteran population has reasonable access to an open national cemetery.

The State Cemetery Grant Program provides matching Federal funds to States for the establishment, expansion or improvement of State owned and operated veterans cemeteries. Program objectives are to complement the National Cemetery System by assisting States in providing veteran burial space at locations close to their place of residence. There are presently 14

operating State veterans cemeteries that have been established, expanded or improved under the program. These cemeteries, located in 9 States and Guam, are meeting program objectives by complementing national cemeteries in meeting veterans' burial needs. However, in some cases their effectiveness in doing so may be diminished by their geographic locations in relation to veteran population concentrations, overlapping of service areas, and restrictive eligibility criteria.

Veteran Demographic Profile:

The median age of the veteran population will increase from the present 53.1 years to a median age of 62.5 years in 2020. Annual veteran deaths will increase from an estimated 426,800 in 1987 to 610,600 in 2010. Cumulative veteran deaths between 1987 and 2020 are expected to be almost 19 million or 68% of all presently living veterans, reaching an annual peak in 2010. The veteran population will decrease in the future through attrition; i.e., veteran deaths will exceed the generation of new veterans through separation from active military duty. The present veteran population of 27.8 million veterans will reduce to 23.9 million in 2000; to 20.3 million in 2010; and, to 16.9 million in 2020, a 39% decrease from today's population.

The largest segment of the veteran population is from the World War II service period with about 10.2 million veterans or 37% of all veterans. Their present median age is 64.6 years indicating that the most significant and immediate impact on veteran deaths will be from this service period.

Impact on Service Requirements:

Interments in national cemeteries have shown a significant increase from 36,422 in 1973 to 52,220 in 1986. The profile of future veteran deaths

coupled with burial needs of spouses and other eligible dependents, indicates that substantial demands will be placed on the National Cemetery System in future years. These demands are beginning to be felt now but will significantly increase in the future. Annual interments in national cemeteries are expected to reach about 81,400 in 2000 and 86,500 in 2010. Cumulative interments in national cemeteries through 2020 will be about 2.3 million.

Due to the depletion of available grave space, many presently open national cemeteries will close during the planning period. In most cases, acquiring additional land is not possible. Between 1987 and 2000, 21 cemeteries will close; between 2000 and 2020, 15 additional cemeteries will close. Willamette National Cemetery, Oregon, the regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region X, will close about 2000. Planning for replacement of this regional cemetery should be initiated. The demographically optimum location for a regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region X is in the Seattle/Tacoma, Washington area.

Veterans who reside within about 100 miles of open national cemeteries are considered reasonably served. However, major metropolitan areas constitute enclaves with large veteran populations from which families are generally unwilling to leave for the purpose of burial. The 100 mile distance may be a greater barrier in densely populated urban areas than in more sparsely populated areas. At present 19.2 million living veterans or close to 70% of the 27.8 million total veterans reside within about 100 miles of the 65 open national cemeteries and the three new national cemeteries now under construction. This represents a very good availability of service in present terms.

By the year 2000, however, an estimated 7.2 million additional veteran deaths will have occurred. The number of open national cemeteries will have declined to 47 through closure of 21 facilities. At that time about 14.4 million or 60% of all veterans will reside within 100 miles of an open national cemetery. By the year 2020 another 11.8 million veteran deaths will occur, and the number of open national cemeteries will further decline to 32. About 8.2 million or 49% of all veterans will reside within 100 miles of an open national cemetery. This reflects a decline of 20% in veterans reasonably served from almost 70% at present to 49% in 2020. Under present scope and conditions in the National Cemetery System, a significant reduction in effectiveness will occur during the period of time when veterans' needs are greatest due to increased veteran and dependent deaths.

Effectiveness:

Effectiveness of national cemeteries and State veterans cemeteries in meeting veterans' burial needs is influenced by four primary factors: their demographic appropriateness of location; their expected longevity of operation; restrictiveness of eligibility requirements; and, veteran participation in the program. Of these, location in relation to veteran population concentrations has the most significant impact. Due to the permanence and finality of burial of a loved one and the desire for frequent grave visitation, survivors often do not consider family interments at locations a great distance from their residence. Experience shows that to expect any appreciable number of interments of decedents whose family residence was beyond about 100 miles from a facility is unrealistic.

Effectiveness of national cemeteries is not adversely affected by eligibility criteria. However, in some cases the effectiveness of State veterans cemeteries in complementing the National Cemetery System is diminished by State imposed restrictions on eligibility such as residency requirements. As a result of influencing factors, veteran participation in the national cemetery program is substantially higher than in the State veteran cemetery program.

Priority Locations for Additional Burial Space:

In response to specific requirements of PL-99-576, Sec. 412 (b)(2), ten geographic areas within the United States in which the need for additional burial space for veterans is greatest have been identified in order of priority. Identification is made through demographic analyses to determine areas of concentrated veteran population which are not served by an open cemetery facility. In some cases, counties within the service areas of identified locations also fall within service areas of existing open national cemeteries; i.e., service areas overlap. However, each area is justified for identification on the basis of net veterans served. Priority is established on the gross magnitude of veterans who reside within about 100 miles from these locations. The ten identified areas in order of total veterans served are:

1. Chicago, Illinois
2. Northern California (San Francisco Area)
3. Miami/Fort Lauderdale, Florida
4. Cleveland/Akron/Canton, Ohio
5. Detroit, Michigan
6. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
7. Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
8. Seattle/Tacoma, Washington
9. Albany/Utica, New York
10. Oklahoma City/Lawton, Oklahoma

Collectively in 1990, 6.8 million veterans will reside within about 100 miles of the ten identified locations representing 25.5% of the total veteran population at that time. The portion of the veteran population will remain high through 2020. The estimated 124,000 veteran deaths that will occur within these areas in 1990 is 26.2% of all veteran deaths that are expected to occur that year and will also remain high through 2020.

Acquisition of State Veterans Cemeteries:

The objective of the State Cemetery Grant Program is to assist in the provision of burial space to complement the National Cemetery System in delivery of veterans' burial benefits. Goals are established to proliferate veteran cemeteries with States as a participator in their establishment and responsible for their operations. With assistance from Federal funds, the State veteran cemetery network is attaining the objective of complementing national cemeteries. However, it is not desirable or advisable for the Federal government to acquire existing State veterans ceneteries for incorporation into the National Cemetery System. Future national cemeteries should be established on the basis of an orderly planning process with nationwide objectives. State veterans cemeteries, although often very effective in meeting their own objectives and in complementing the National Cemetery System, would not as a whole meet this criteria. Acquisition of selected State veterans cemeteries is not recommended, in view of the potential for setting up adversarial situations among States and the Federal government.

Recommendations:

Projected increases in demand for burial in national cemeteries, coupled with progressive closures of now open national cemeteries, make it extremely important to develop long range plans for meeting veterans' future burial needs. A five-point plan for meeting those needs is proposed as follows:

1. Encourage Expanded Participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program - This program is in place and funds are available to States for the establishment, expansion and improvement of veterans cemeteries. Participation allows States to provide veteran burial space in close proximity to their place of residence while alleviating the full financial burden on the Federal government in meeting veterans' burial needs. The program should be studied to identify areas of improvement to make it more effective in meeting program objectives and more appealing to State legislators.

2. Phased Development of Presently Undeveloped Land in Open National Cemeteries -

This is continuation of present policy and does not represent expansion of the National Cemetery System since undeveloped land is already in inventory. Land is developed in phases to provide about ten years of burial operations to avoid excessive grounds maintenance costs. Developments in open national cemeteries could cost about $128.3 million through the year 2020. These costs must be considered overhead for staying in business by continuing operations in already open national cemeteries.

3. Expansion of the Garden Niche Concept -

This is a continuation of existing policy by providing specially designed sites for the interment of cremated remains. Cremated remains interments have increased from 3.3% of all interments in 1973, to 16% of all interments in 1986. The practice of cremation is expected to increase dramatically in the future. In recognition of this trend, garden niches should be provided in all national cemeteries to the extent practical. This will extend longevity of operations by avoiding inappropriate use of full casket gravesites for the interment of cremated remains. Related costs will be minimal since the action requires only modest development of land that is otherwise unusable for burial of casketed remains. Expansion of the concept represents an efficient method of meeting needs through recognizing the changing trends in burial customs. Garden niches allow access to closed national cemeteries and thereby provide the veteran public with a greater choice in selecting a final resting place. Flat grave markers are used for garden niches in order to allow use of land that otherwise could not accommodate full casket burials.

4. Limited Expansion of Existing National Cemeteries -

National cemeteries that will close due to the depletion of grave space will be analyzed as to their contribution to effectiveness in meeting veterans' burial needs from a national perspective. Those whose contributions are minimal will be allowed to close. Every effort will be made to expand those where contribution is significant due to their

geographic location in relation to veteran population concentrations and high participation. In keeping with existing practice, expansion should be through acquisition of land which is adjacent to the cemetery in order to maximize operating efficiency.

5. Review Policy for Future Expansion of the National Cemetery System - Recent expansion of the National Cemetery System has been under the "regional concept". The opening of the newly constructed Fort Mitchell National Cemetery in Alabama to serve Federal Region IV has completed expansion under present policy and therefore completes the concept.

This report identifies ten geographic areas in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest and reports them in order of priority based on demographic analysis. However, this identification process does not change the regional cemetery policy or endorse construction of national cemeteries at any or all of these locations.

Any future physical expansion of the National Cemetery System will require a change to existing policy and would be developed by the Agency. Development under past policy would be evaluated for its effectiveness in accomplishing program objectives. Parameters on the extent to which the veteran community is to be reasonably served needs to be defined. Future expansion of the National Cemetery System, if any, will be under a policy so developed.

Conclusions:

Selective continued operation of presently open national cemeteries and implementation of other stated actions are paramount in recognizing and meeting veterans' future burial needs under present policy. Geographic areas in need of burial space have been identified. Defining the degree to which veterans' burial needs are to be met and establishing an effective policy to meet those needs will provide a sound foundation for the future operation of the National Cemetery System in meeting its obligation to veterans and their dependents.

x

INTRODUCTION

Purpose: This report on the National Cemetery System is prepared in response to Public Law 99-576, Veterans' Benefit Improvement and Health-Care Authorization Act of 1986, which was enacted on October 28, 1986. The law requires the report include:

- A plan for the operation of the National Cemetery System through the year 2000; a description of anticipated general trends relating to the operation between the years 2000 and 2020; and, a discussion of the provisions of the plan developed in response to these trends.

- A list, in order of priority, of the 10 geographic areas in the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest.

- An assessment of the desirability and feasibility of acquiring certain existing State veterans' cemeteries and of the role of State veterans' cemeteries in meeting the needs for burial space for veterans.

- General plans for any anticipated expansion of the National Cemetery System.

In response to these requirements, this report will provide an overview of the National Cemetery System and veterans cemeteries established, expanded or improved through Federal assistant program; a profile of the present veteran population and expected future trends in the veteran population; an evaluation of the effectiveness of the system in meeting veterans' burial needs; identification of geographic areas of need through demographic analysis; general plans for future operations of the National Cemetery System to meet veterans' burial needs; and an evaluation of the of the role of the State veterans cemeteries, including the desireability of incorporating State veterans cemeteries into the National Cemetery System.

Planning Factors and Assumptions: In evaluating national cemetery planning, a number of factors that are peculiar to the benefit are recognized. Burial benefits administered by the Department of Memorial Affairs (DMA) are:

- Particularly relevant to the aging veteran.
- Unique in the VA in that they are equally applicable to veterans and dependents as opposed to most other VA benefits which are available to veterans only.

- Needed immediately by the family at a time of deep emotional stress.

- Influenced by long-standing customs and traditions, often with religious bases.

- Highly sensitive and often representing the final act of respect.

- Lasting in perpetuity.

Although every effort is made to base planning on sound, supportable data, certain assumptions must be made in any analysis of future requirements. Assumptions made in planning for the establishment, development and expansion of national cemeteries are that:

- The United States will remain in a "no war" situation.

- No catastrophic national disaster or epidemic will occur.

- The military establishment will continue to be maintained on an all volunteer basis at a relatively stable level.

- Major legislative changes will not occur in the Department of Veterans Benefits area of burial benefits.

- Present socio-economic and long-term unemployment conditions will remain relatively stable.

- The rate of veteran participation in the program will not change significantly.

Consideration has been given to the degree to which national cemeteries under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior complement the National Cemetery System in meeting veterans' burial needs. There are fourteen (14) national cemeteries under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior of which two (2) are in an open status; Andersonville National Historic Site (Georgia) and Andrew Johnson National Historic Site (Tennessee).

The two open facilities interred 118 veterans during 1986. Collectively, the fourteen cemeteries interred 187 veterans during the year. In recognition of their primary mission of maintaining historic parklands, the interment rates at these cemeteries are understandably

low. Although all of these sites are national historic treasures, their contribution to meeting veterans' burial needs is necessarily limited, and will not be further addressed.

For the purpose of this report, national cemeteries are the 110 operating facilities under the jurisdiction of the Veterans Administration. References to State veterans cemeteries are the 16 State owned facilities that have been established, expanded or improved with assistance through the State Cemetery Grants Program.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

Background: Public Law 93-43, National Cemeteries Act of 1973, established a National Cemetery System under the Veterans Administration. The law transferred 82 Department of the Army National Cemeteries to the VA which, combined with 21 existing VA cemeteries, formulated a system comprising 103 national cemeteries.

Subsequent to enactment of PL 93-43 the Congress directed that the Administrator conduct a study of the National Cemetery System to consider means by which the system should expand. Proposals were made, and later adopted, that the system expand under the "Regional Concept." This concept provided for the establishment of one large national cemetery in each of the ten Standard Federal Regions and one in the Washington, D.C. area. Four (4) existing large national cemeteries having extended longevity were designated as regional cemeteries. Since 1978, the VA has constructed 7 additional regional cemeteries which are now in operation. Establishment under the concept has been completed with the regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region IV at Fort Mitchell, Alabama.

Regional national cemeteries are as follows:

Standard Federal Regional	National Cemetery	Date Opened
Region I	Massachusetts National Cemetery, MA	October 1980
Region II	Calverton National Cemetery, NY	September1978
Region III	Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, PA	September 1982
Region IV	Fort Mitchell National Cemetery, AL	May 1987
Region V	Fort Custer National Cemetery, MI	June 1982
Region VI	Houston National Cemetery, TX	1/
Region VII	Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, MO	1/
Region VIII	Fort Logan National Cemetery, CO	1/
Region IX	Riverside National Cemetery, CA	November 1978
Region X	Willamette National Cemetery, OR	1/
Washington, D.C.	Quantico National Cemetery, VA	May 1983

1/ Existing prior to 1973

Location and Status: Presently, there are 110 operating national cemeteries in the National Cemetery System located in 38 States and Puerto Rico. A listing of these national cemeteries is provided on pages 9 through 11. Twenty-Five States have more than one national cemetery within their boundaries.

States not having a national cemetery within their boundaries are:

Connecticut 1/	North Dakota
Delaware 2/	Rhode Island 1/
Idaho	Utah
Montana 2/	Vermont
Nevada	Washington
New Hampshire	Wyoming 1/

1/ State veterans cemetery (ies) established with Federal grant funds
2/ State veterans cemetery grant in process

Of the 110 operating national cemeteries, 65 are in "open status" while 45 are in "closed status". An open national cemetery is defined as one in which there is an availability of unoccupied, uncommitted gravesites suitable for casketed remains for the interment of first family members. Although unable to accommodate the burial of first family members, interment activities continue in many closed national cemeteries through burial of additional family members in already occupied gravesites, interments in gravesites which were reserved prior to 1962 and interments of cremated remains.

In addition to the States which do not have a national cemetery the following States do not have an open national cemetery within their boundaries:

Arizona 2/	Maryland 2/
Georgia 3/	New Jersey 2/
Maine 2/	West Virginia 1/

1/ National Cemeteries under construction

2/ State veterns cemetery (ies) developed with Federal grant funds

3/ Open Department of the Interior national cemetery

Following is a breakdown of national cemeteries by State with an indication of each cemetery's status:

LISTING OF INSTALLATIONS BY STATE

Alabama

Fort Mitchell National Cemetery (open)
Mobile National Cemetery (closed)

Alaska

Fort Richardson National Cemetery (open)
Sitka National Cemetery (open)

Arizona

Prescott National Cemetery (closed)

Arkansas

Fayetteville National Cemetery (open)
Fort Smith National Cemetery (open)
Little Rock National Cemetery (open)

California

Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (closed)
Golden Gate National Cemetery (closed)
Los Angeles National Cemetery (closed)
Riverside National Cemetery (open)
San Francisco National Cemetery (closed)

Colorado

Fort Logan National Cemetery (open)
Fort Lyon National Cemetery (open)

Florida

Barrancas National Cemetery (open)
Bay Pines National Cemetery (open)
Florida National Cemetery *
St. Augustine National Cemetery (closed)

Georgia

Marietta National Cemetery (closed)

Hawaii

National Memorial Cemetery
of the Pacific (open)

Illinois

Alton National Cemetery (closed)
Camp Butler National Cemetery (open)
Danville National Cemetery (open)
Mound City National Cemetery (open)
Quincy National Cemetery (open)
Rock Island National Cemetery (open)

Indiana

Crown Hill National Cemetery (closed)
Marion National Cemetery (open)
New Albany National Cemetery (open)

Iowa

Keokuk National Cemetery (open)

Kansas

Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery (closed)
Fort Scott National Cemetery (open)
Leavenworth National Cemetery (open)

Kentucky

Camp Nelson National Cemetery (open)
Cave Hill National Cemetery (closed)
Danville National Cemetery (closed)
Lebanon National Cemetery (open)
Lexington National Cemetery (closed)
Mill Springs National Cemetery (open)
Zachary Taylor National Cemetery (open)

LISTING OF NATIONAL CEMETERIES BY STATE (Cont'd)

Louisiana

Alexandria National Cemetery (open)
Baton Rouge National Cemetery (closed)
Port Hudson National Cemetery (open)

Maine

Togus National Cemetery (closed)

Maryland

Annapolis National Cemetery (closed)
Baltimore National Cemetery (closed)
Loudon Park National Cemetery (closed)

Massachusetts

Massachusetts National Cemetery (open)

Michigan

Fort Custer National Cemetery (open)

Minnesota

Fort Snelling National Cemetery (open)

Mississippi

Biloxi National Cemetery (open)
Corinth National Cemetery (open)
Natchez National Cemetery (open)

Missouri

Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery(open)
Jefferson City National Cemetery (closed)
Springfield National Cemetery (open)

Nebraska

Fort McPherson National Cemetery(open)

New Jersey

Beverly National Cemetery (closed)
Finn's Point National Cemetery(closed)

New Mexico

Fort Bayard National Cemetery (open)
Santa Fe National Cemetery (open)

New York

Bath National Cemetery (open)
Calverton National Cemetery (open)
Cypress Hills National Cemetery(closed
Long Island National Cemetery (closed)
Woodlawn National Cemetery (closed)

North Carolina

New Bern National Cemetery (open)
Raleigh National Cemetery (open)
Salisbury National Cemetery (open)
Wilmington National Cemetery (closed)

Ohio

Dayton National Cemetery (open)

Oklahoma

Fort Gibson National Cemetery (open)

Oregon

Eagle Point National Cemetery (open)
Roseburg National Cemetery (closed)
Willamette National Cemetery (open)

LISTING OF INSTALLATIONS BY STATE (Cont'd)

Pennsylvania

Indiantown Gap National Cemetery (open)
Philadelphia National Cemetery (closed)

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico National Cemetery (open)

South Carolina

Beaufort National Cemetery (open)
Florence National Cemetery (open)

South Dakota

Black Hills National Cemetery (open)
Fort Meade National Cemetery (closed)
Hot Springs National Cemetery (closed)

Tennessee

Chattanooga National Cemetery (open)
Knoxville National Cemetery (open)
Memphis National Cemetery (open)
Mountain Home National Cemetery (open)
Nashville National Cemetery (open)

Texas

Fort Bliss National Cemetery (open)
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery (open)
Houston National Cemetery (open)
Kerrville National Cemetery (closed)
San Antonio National Cemetery (closed)

Virginia

Alexandria National Cemetery (closed)
Balls Bluff National Cemetery (closed)
City Point National Cemetery (closed)
Cold Harbor National Cemetery (closed)
Culpeper National Cemetery (open)
Danville National Cemetery (closed)
Fort Harrison National Cemetery(closed)
Glendale National Cemetery (closed)
Hampton National Cemetery (open)
Hampton (VA) National Cemetery (closed)
Quantico National Cemetery (open)
Richmond National Cemetery (closed)
Seven Pines National Cemetery (closed)
Staunton National Cemetery (closed)
Winchester National Cemetery (closed)

West Virginia

Grafton National Cemetery (closed)
West Virgina National Cemetery *

Wisconsin

Wood National Cemetery (open)

* Under Construction

Acreage: The 110 operating national cemeteries comprise 9,871 total acres of which 4,112 acres are developed for burial space and other cemetery amenities. The 5,759 undeveloped acres represent potential for extending the delivery of burial benefits into the future. National cemeteries vary widely in size and scope; the largest being Calverton National Cemetery on Long Island, New York with 902 acres, and the smallest being Hampton (VAMC) National Cemetery in Virginia with only 0.1 acre.

Of the 65 presently open national cemeteries, 34 have land which is not yet developed to provide burial space and related amenities. Since closings are predicated on depletion of burial space, these cemeteries generally offer potential for meeting veterans' burial needs far into the future. The remaining 31 open national cemeteries are developed to their full potential and depletion of existing developed gravesites will result in their closing unless additional land is acquired. Longevity of open national cemeteries and their ability to meet veterans' future burial needs are discussed later in this report.

Activities in National Cemeteries: Basic activities in national cemeteries relate to interment of remains and maintenance of gravesites. Of course other activities such as equipment maintenance, administrative functions and commemorative ceremonies also take place.

About 1,813,500 decedents are interred in the National Cemetery System, occupying about 1,640,720 gravesites of all types. Interment volumes have shown a general annual increase since 1973. Following is a summary of system-wide

annual interments since the National Cemetery System has been in operation under the VA:

Fiscal Year	Total Interments	Fiscal Year	Total Interments
1973	36,422	1979	39,248
1974	36,610	1980	41,120
1975	37,776	1981	41,811
1976	38,632	1982	41,422
1976(TQ)	8,704	1983	44,684
1977	37,013	1984	47,021
1978	36,744	1985	50,489
		1986	52,220

In evaluating interment activities, two significant factors must be considered. Interments are of casketed or cremated remains. The ratio of interments of cremated remains to total interments is an important factor since burial of cremains generally does not result in as much land consumption as in-ground burial. The ratio of interments of dependents to total interments is important since it indicates the degree of program participation by eligible family members other than the veteran.

The chart on the following page provides a history of interments in the national cemeteries since 1973 with indicators of these factors.

NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM
HISTORY OF INTERMENTS

FISCAL YEAR	CASKET	CREMAIN	CREMAIN % OF TOTAL	TOTAL INTERMENTS	VETERAN	ACTIVE DUTY	DEPENDENT	DEPENDENT % OF TOTAL
1973	35,233	1,189	3.3	36,422	24,737	551	11,134	30.6
1974	35,366	1,244	3.4	36,610	24,938	318	11,354	31.0
1975	36,207	1,569	4.2	37,776	26,959	320	10,497	27.8
1976	36,634	1,998	5.2	38,632	27,742	348	10,542	27.3
1976 (TQ)	8,215	489	5.6	8,704	6,137	87	2,480	28.5
1977	34,807	2,206	6.0	37,013	26,190	265	10,558	28.5
1978	34,129	2,615	7.1	36,744	25,829	302	10,613	28.9
1979	36,400	2,848	7.3	39,248	28,231	309	10,708	27.3
1980	38,024	3,096	7.5	41,120	29,262	284	11,574	28.1
1981	38,283	3,528	8.4	41,811	29,955	280	11,576	27.2
1982	37,274	4,148	10.0	41,422	29,736	264	11,422	27.6
1983	38,981	5,703	12.8	44,684	32,129	278	12,277	27.5
1984	40,868	6,153	13.1	47,021	33,776	290	12,955	27.5
1985	42,908	7,581	15.0	50,489	36,565	272	13,652	27.0
1986	43,820	8,400	16.1	52,220	37,702	274	14,244	27.3

It is evident from this data that:

1. The trend toward the custom of cremation is significant in the National Cemetery System (NCS). In FY 1973, only 3.3% of all interments were of cremated remains. This has steadily increased to about 16% in FY 1986. The percentage is substantially higher in some geographic areas of the country due to local customs and economic conditions. The increase in interments of cremated remains in the NCS has been accommodated through use of garden niches which are small burial plots designed specifically for this purpose and which are marked with flat markers.

2. Approximately 27% of all interments are of deceased dependents (family members) of veterans. Interments of deceased veterans are far and away the largest contributor to burials in national cemeteries.

Interment activities vary widely in national cemeteries from the standpoint of volume and type. The highest volume cemetery in FY 1986 was Calverton National Cemetery on Long Island, New York which conducted 6,667 interments. Ninety seven (97) national cemeteries conducted at least one interment, while twelve (12) conducted no interments in 1986. These are obviously closed cemeteries. However, some closed national cemeteries such as Long Island National Cemetery (2,858 interments in FY 1986) maintain a relatively high interment volume through burials in already occupied gravesites and in previously reserved gravesites. Other closed national cemeteries such as the four in California (Golden Gate, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Fort Rosecrans National Cemeteries) continue to provide service through burial of cremated remains in garden niches.

The charts on the following pages provide an overview of national cemetery operations for 1986, their location and the expected longevity of each national cemetery. The map on page 20 indicates their geographic location:

Gravesites: There are about 552,100 developed, unoccupied gravesites suitable for casketed remains in the national cemeteries of which about 60,200 are reserved for specific veterans under a reservation program which was discontinued in 1962. There is a potential for development of about 3.5 million additional gravesites suitable for casketed remains in undeveloped land. Gravesites are developed in phases to provide burial sections with sufficient grave space to allow about 10 years of operations. This is done to minimize long-term costs for grounds maintenance.

Since 1973, national cemeteries have made special provisions for interring cremated remains to avoid using full size gravesites. Initially, the practice of providing half-sites at some cemeteries was implemented in the interest of land conservation. A portion of full sized gravesites in a specified burial section were in effect bisected in plan to form half-sites for the specific purpose of establishing a cremain section. The establishment of garden niches to accommodate interments of cremated remains has allowed a departure from development of half-sites.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES - LOCATION, INTERMENTS, AND STATUS OF GRAVESITES
SEPTEMBER 30, 1986

NATIONAL CEMETERY	FY 1986 INTERMENTS	CUMULATIVE GRAVESITES USED 1/	RESERVED GRAVESITES	ADJACENT GRAVESITES SET-ASIDE	CREMAIN SITES AVAILABLE 2/	CASKET GRAVESITES AVAILABLE 3/	CLOSE-OUT DATE (FISCAL YR) 4/
ALEXANDRIA, LA	148	6,763	145		41	728	1992
ALEXANDRIA, VA	5	4,064	23		73	1	Closed
ALTON, IL	9	504	34		7	6	Closed
ANNAPOLIS, MD	5	2,925	28		1	2	Closed
BALLS BLUFF, VA	0	25	0		0	0	Closed
BALTIMORE, MD	327	34,562	2,877		761	33	Closed
BARRANCAS, FL	559	15,495	554	1,095	401	1,872	2006
BATH, NY	172	9,512	0		34	421	2030+
BATON ROUGE, LA	10	5,034	46		2	1	Closed
BAY PINES, FL	1,045	6,301	0	772	302	261	1987
BEAUFORT, SC	192	12,329	162		119	4,895	2018
BEVERLY, NJ	385	37,437	3,461		144	0	Closed
BILOXI, MS	343	4,090	524	458	276	3,961	1995
BLACK HILLS, SD	429	7,919	407		600	13,230	2030+
CALVERTON, NY	6,667	49,241	0	15,333	5,205	81,776	2030+
CAMP BUTLER, IL	308	9,847	267		93	8,667	2030+
CAMP NELSON, KY	192	6,861	60		224	2,125	2020
CAVE HILL, KY	0	5,634	3		25	0	Closed
CHATTANOOGA, TN	565	26,473	492		44	13,279	2020
CITY POINT, VA	19	5,505	74		19	0	Closed
COLD HARBOR, VA	0	971	0		0	0	Closed
CORINTH, MS	25	6,368	17		39	9,523	2030+
CROWN HILL, IN	0	795	0		0	0	Closed
CULPEPER, VA	162	5,698	5		40	5,046	2028
CYPRESS HILLS, NY	26	18,569	55		49	30	Closed
DANVILLE, IL	110	6,745	0		264	12,499	2030+
DANVILLE, KY	0	393	1		9	2	Closed
DANVILLE, VA	2	2,155	25		27	0	Closed
DAYTON, OH	542	27,696	2		29	9,454	2006
EAGLE POINT, OR	270	2,578	0		201	4,062	2030+
FAYETTEVILLE, AR	102	3,879	3		19	127	1988
FINN'S POINT, NJ	0	2,703	2		0	0	Closed
FLORENCE, SC	126	4,910	53		29	727	2012
FLORIDA, FL	0	0	0		0	0	*
FT. BAYARD, NM	38	2,041	0		37	2,515	2030+
FT. BLISS, TX	866	19,013	1,106		345	6,638	2030+
FT. CUSTER, MI	679	1,781	24	417	953	7,242	2030+
FT. GIBSON, OK	308	8,763	110		35	1,285	2014
FT. HARRISON, VA	6	1,113	2		0	0	Closed
FT. LEAVENWORTH, KS 5/	0	0	0		0	0	Closed

1/ Includes all type of gravesites including columbaria niches.

2/ In-ground sites suitable for cremated remains and columbaria niches.

3/ Gravesites available excluding Reserved and Adjacent Gravesites Set-Aside.

4/ Cemeteries indicated as closed may continue to inter eligible family members in already occupied gravesites and previously reserved gravesites.

5/ Date combined with Leavenworth National Cemetery.

* Not yet open

NATIONAL CEMETERIES - LOCATION, INTERMENTS, AND STATUS OF GRAVESITES
SEPTEMBER 30, 1986

NATIONAL CEMETERY	FY 1986 INTERMENTS	CUMULATIVE GRAVESITES USED 1/	RESERVED GRAVESITES	ADJACENT GRAVESITES SET-ASIDE	CREMAIN SITES AVAILABLE	CASKET GRAVESITES AVAILABLE 2/	CLOSE-OUT DATE 3/(FISCAL YR)
FT. LOGAN, CO	1,805	32,661	660		1,714	10,353	2030+
FT. LYON, CO	31	1,072	0		0	6,148	2030+
FT. MCPHERSON, NE	134	4,127	82		1	1,608	2030+
FT. MEADE, SD	0	188	0		0	0	Closed
FT. MITCHELL, AL	0	0	0		0	0	*
FT. RICHARDSON, AK	96	1,502	0		279	1,193	2030+
FT. ROSECRANS, CA	1,025	46,801	2,008		679	1	Closed
FT. SAM HOUSTON, TX	2,251	47,697	2,813		84	17,576	2002
FT. SCOTT, KS	88	3,387	82	92	18	3,608	2019
FT. SMITH, AR	232	6,380	199		87	2,102	1998
FT. SNELLING, MN	1,386	85,057	12,011	3,993	3,485	28,902	2030+
GLENDALE, VA	1	1,308	0		0	0	Closed
GOLDEN GATE, CA	1,413	100,605	7,389		5,545	23	Closed
GRAFTON, WV	3	2,086	45		0	0	Closed
HAMPTON(VAC), VA	0	22	0		0	0	Closed
HAMPTON, VA	337	21,671	446	332	117	1,984	1999
HOT SPRINGS, SD	0	1,481	0		0	1	Closed
HOUSTON, TX	1,431	18,866	30		20	10,949	2030+
INDIANTOWN GAP, PA	681	2,220	0		1,111	13,318	2030+
JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MO	2,859	75,142	1,959		491	14,143	2030+
JEFFERSON CITY, MO	4	1,583	52		23	1	Closed
KEOKUK, IA	78	2,794	59		40	3,695	2030+
KERRVILLE, TX	3	460	0		0	0	Closed
KNOXVILLE, TN	131	7,626	187		115	294	1989
LEAVENWORTH, KS	743	35,084	524		84	4,728	2020+
LEBANON, KY	23	2,162	29		51	1,307	2030+
LEXINGTON, KY	0	1,388	0		9	0	Closed
LITTLE ROCK, AR	403	17,633	286		25	620	1988
LONG ISLAND, NY	2,858	235,709	11,966		5,989	26	Closed
LOS ANGELES, CA	677	71,900	2		2,317	0	Closed
LOUDON PARK, MD	4	4,493	5		132	8	Closed
MARIETTA, GA	107	16,548	364		89	0	Closed
MARION, IN	108	5,154	0		1	291	2030+
MASSACHUSETTS, MA	1,001	4,647	0	1,772	1,438	20,656	2030+
MEMPHIS, TN	819	32,517	529		562	3,036	1991
MILL SPRINGS, KY	43	1,890	29		109	378	1997
MOBILE, AL	8	3,615	237		5	7	Closed
MOUND CITY, IL	38	6,966	63		24	1,257	2022
MOUNTAIN HOME, TN	187	6,965	0		101	2,872	2030+
NASHVILLE, TN	504	27,639	359	914	324	2,793	1991

1/ Includes all type of gravesites including columbaria niches.

2/ In-ground sites suitable for cremated remains and columbaria niches.

3/ Gravesites available excluding Reserved and Adjacent Gravesites Set-Aside.

4/ Cemeteries indicated as closed may continue to inter eligible family members in already occupied gravesites and previously reserved gravesites.

5/ Data combined with Leavenworth National Cemetery.

* Not yet open

NATIONAL CEMETERIES - LOCATION, INTERMENTS, AND STATUS OF GRAVESITES
SEPTEMBER 30, 1986

NATIONAL CEMETERY	FY 1986 INTERMENTS	CUMULATIVE GRAVESITES USED 1/	RESERVED GRAVESITES	ADJACENT GRAVESITES SET-ASIDE	CREMAIN SITES AVAILABLE 2/	CASKET GRAVESITES AVAILABLE 3/	CLOSE-OUT DATE (FISCAL YR) 4/
NATCHEZ, MS	67	5,178	48		46	350	1992
NEW ALBANY, IN	44	5,004	142		202	738	2005
NEW BERN, NC	125	5,925	91		160	442	1991
NMCP, HI	800	30,547	639		5,265	864	1989
PHILADELPHIA, PA	23	10,370	37		13	2	Closed
PORT HUDSON, LA	197	7,098	30		14	791	1991
PRESCOTT, AZ	0	2,946	0		0	0	Closed
PUERTO RICO, PR	1,802	16,578	1,233		20	16,175	2010+
QUANTICO, VA	615	2,031	0		3,534	56,149	2010+
QUINCY, IL	6	497	1		13	82	2000
RALEIGH, NC	131	4,480	81	82	133	727	1991
RICHMOND, VA	19	7,286	200		0	0	Closed
RIVERSIDE, CA	5,048	32,203	0	6,867	6,860	15,434	2010+
ROCK ISLAND, IL	412	12,489	220	749	448	4,066	1994
ROSEBURG, OR	9	2,380	0		0	0	Closed
ST. AUGUSTINE, FL	8	1,171	16		36	0	Closed
SALISBURY, NC	140	14,969	62		125	674	2008
SAN ANTONIO, TX	3	3,009	27		23	173	Closed
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	369	24,037	609		442	15	Closed
SANTA FE, NM	859	15,752	190		256	4,396	1994
SEVEN PINES, VA	3	1,134	1		0	0	Closed
SITKA, AK	15	701	1		4	36	2010+
SPRINGFIELD, MO	106	8,572	190		99	853	2005
STAUNTON, VA	2	843	5		9	2	Closed
TOGUS, ME	0	5,371	0		0	0	Closed
WEST VIRGINIA, WV	0	0	0		0	0	*
WILLAMETTE, OR	2,531	42,189	1,911		2,046	11,916	2001
WILMINGTON, NC	123	4,944	58		1	60	1987
WINCHESTER, VA	9	5,085	35		91	1	Closed
WOOD, WI	936	24,818	1		158	681	1997
WOODLAWN, NY	17	6,306	256		5	1	Closed
ZACHARY TAYLOR, KY	462	9,110	918		160	819	1988
TOTALS	52,220	1,640,721	40,211	32,836	51,181	459,043	

1/ Includes all type of gravesites including columbaria niches.

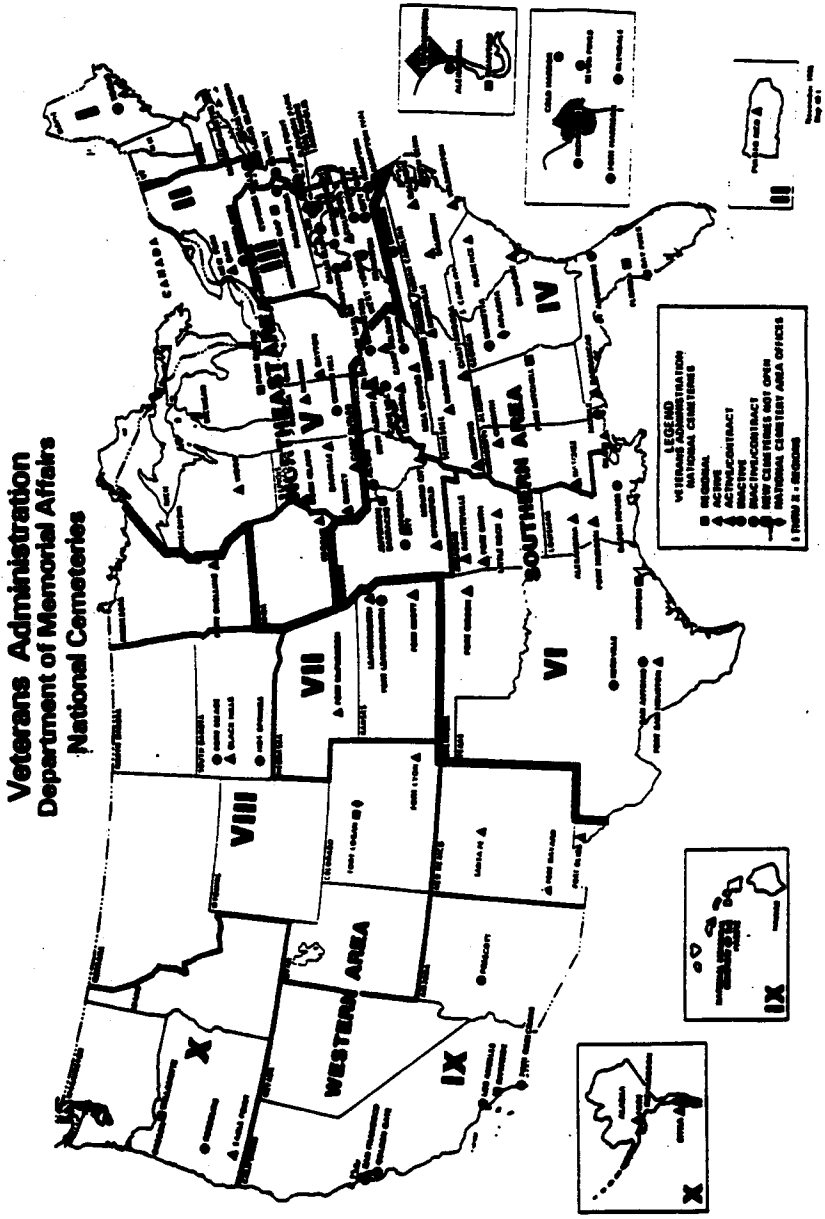
2/ In-ground sites suitable for cremated remains and columbaria niches.

3/ Gravesites available excluding Reserved and Adjacent Gravesites Set-Aside.

4/ Cemeteries indicated as closed may continue to inter eligible family members in already occupied gravesites and previously reserved gravesites.

5/ Data combined with Leavenworth National Cemetery.

* Not yet open


Veterans Administration
Department of Memorial Affairs
National Cemeteries
NORTHEAST AREA
SOUTHERN AREA
WESTERN AREA
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
LEGEND
VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CEMETERIES
REGIONAL
ACTIVE
ACTIVE/CONTRACT
INACTIVE
INACTIVE/CONTRACT
NEW CEMETERIES NOT OPEN
NATIONAL CEMETERY AREA OFFICE

A program to provide columbaria in certain national cemeteries was adopted as a further measure to accommodate cremated remains. One columbarium already existed in the system and five new columbaria have been constructed since 1973. Since innovative methods such as the garden niches described below have proven to be more cost effective for accommodating cremated remains, there are no plans for further development of columbaria in the National Cemetery System. However, 12,526 unoccupied niches are available in existing columbaria.

A new and innovative approach to effectively accommodate cremated remains in the National Cemetery System was adopted in 1982, with implementation of the Garden Niche Concept. This program provides for development of small 3' x 3' gravesites for the interment of cremated remains in otherwise unusable cemetery land such as along walkways, in section aisles and borders, and on steep slopes where interments of casketed remains cannot be accomplished. These sites are memorialized with the smaller and lighter flat markers out of necessity to accommodate turf maintenance. Garden niches have proven to be a highly effective and efficient method of dealing with cremated remains and have allowed a number of closed national cemeteries to extend service through interments of cremated remains. The potential exists for development of garden niches in both open and closed national cemeteries.

There are presently about 66,420 cremated remains interred in the National Cemetery System occupying about 40,330 in-ground cremain sites (obstructed sites, garden niches and half-sites), and 8,037 columbaria niches. During FY 1986, 8,400 interments of cremated remains were accomplished using 5,999 unoccupied in-ground cremain sites and 1,033 unoccupied columbaria niches.

It should be noted that all interments of cremated remains are not accommodated in especially designed cremain gravespace. When a deceased first family member is interred in a full casket gravesite, subsequent eligible family members who are deceased and cremated, are interred in the same grave with the first family member decedent.

Planned Expansion: Planned expansion of the National Cemetery System is proceeding on schedule on the new West Virginia National Cemetery located near Grafton. Completion of initial phase development for this new national cemetery is projected for October 1987. Land has been acquired and Master Plans are completed for the new Florida National Cemetery to be located in north-central Florida. Construction of this new cemetery began in January 1987, and completion of first phase development is projected for April 1988.

With completion of these two new cemeteries, the National Cemetery System will consist of 112 operating national cemeteries. In addition, the site identification process and environmental analysis is underway for establishment of a new national cemetery in Northern California.

Eligibility for Interment: Eligibility for interment in a national cemetery is predicated on active military service, the duration of that service, and the character of separation from that service. It is extended to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who die on active duty and veterans of those Armed Forces who were discharged or separated from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable. More recent legislation requires that veterans (enlisted personnel only) of military service who entered on active duty after September 7, 1980, and veterans (expanded to include officers) who entered on active duty after October 16, 1981, and who had not previously completed a continuous period of active duty of at least 24 months or been discharged or released from active duty under 10 U.S.C. 1171 (early-out), and whose discharge from active military duty is characterized as "General", "Honorable", or "Under Honorable Conditions", must meet the minimum active-duty service requirement of 24 months or the full period for which the person was called or ordered to active duty.

Members of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces, Army and Air National Guards and ROTC components whose death occurs under honorable conditions while serving on active duty for training, while on official travel to or from that training, or while hospitalized or undergoing treatment at the expense of the Government for injury or disease contracted or incurred during performance of active duty for training are also eligible for interment in a national cemetery. In addition, eligibility is extended to certain commissioned officers of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and citizens who, during time of war, served in the Armed Forces of a government allied with the United States. Certain additional criteria must be met to qualify for eligibility for this latter group.

The benefit of burial in a national cemetery is further extended to certain family members of eligibles described above. The spouse; unremarried widow/widower; minor dependent children (or until the age of 23 if attending an approved educational institution); and unmarried adult children if they become permanently incapable of self-support due to physical or mental disabilities before attaining the age of 21 are eligible for interment in a national cemetery on the basis of the veteran's military service.

Eligibility provisions extend demands on the National Cemetery System since potential users of national cemeteries are in numbers far beyond only living veterans and active military duty personnel. This has significant impact on national cemeteries from the standpoint of interment workloads and gravesite usage.

Chapter 3

State Veterans Cemeteries

Background: The State Cemetery Grants program came into existence with the enactment of the Veterans' Housing Benefit Act of 1978 (Pub. Law 95-476) on October 18, 1978. The Act, as amended by Public Law 98-223, authorized appropriations for two five-year periods (FY 1980-1984 and FY 1985-1989) for the purpose of making grants to any State to assist in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans' cemeteries owned by the State.

The Act implemented, in part, one of the recommendations of the study made by the Veterans Administration at the direction of Congress in Public Law 93-43, the National Cemeteries Act of 1973. The program is intended to encourage States to provide additional gravesites for veterans in areas where the regional cemetery concept is unable to fully satisfy the burial needs of veterans.

Role of State Veterans Cemeteries: The State veterans cemeteries provide gravesites for veterans in those areas not served by national cemeteries at a substantial cost avoidance to the Federal government, complement those cemeteries already established or planned for the National Cemetery System, and provide a vehicle whereby veterans, who so desire, and are eligible, can be buried in close proximity to their home and loved ones.

To accomplish the program goals and objectives, the States have been allowed to participate in the implementation of national policy according to their own priorities. The Federal government intentionally exercises little authority

over the administration, personnel, maintenance or operation of any State veterans cemetery constructed, expanded, or improved with assistance received under this program.

Status of the Grants Program: When the program became operational in October 1980, 35 States and Territories expressed interest in the program. Currently, 30 States and Territories are either expressing interest or have participated in the program; 17 States have applied for assistance; and 25 awards totaling $10,383,165 have been made to nine States and the Territory of Guam in support of 14 cemeteries. The remaining 13 States are considering application in the future.

This interest ranges from a grass-roots movement to establish a new State veterans cemetery in Georgia to improvement of an existing cemetery in Maui, Hawaii. Unfortunately, State participation in the program is adversely affected by the same budgetary constraints experienced by the Federal government. The funding of public programs has never been a case of working with unlimited resources and there are restrictions at the State level on the use of funds for the establishment of veterans cemeteries due to the costs involved in staffing, equipping, and operating the cemeteries for perpetuity.

Public Law 95-476 provides funding for the program and authorizes the Administrator of Veterans Affairs to operate the program in accordance with such regulations as he may prescribe. The wide latitude granted the agency allows maximum flexibility for program administration. The law stipulates, however,

that in prescribing regulations the Administrator shall take into account the standards and guidelines for site selection, planning, and construction that are applicable to cemeteries in the National Cemetery System.

One of the underlying considerations that led to the enactment of the law was the desire of many veterans to be buried with their comrades-in-arms. In some locations, however, veterans were unable to fulfill their desires because a national cemetery did not exist in a sufficiently close proximity to their homes or the cemetery was closed.

There are twelve States that, at present, do not have a national cemetery within their boundaries. In addition, there are five States that have national cemeteries that are closed to interments of first family members. There are also States that have an open national cemetery but potential beneficiaries believe that it is inadequate due to the distance from their homes, its scheduled closing, or that another cemetery is justified because of the number of veterans in the State.

The following table shows construction projects that have been supported with Federal funds under the State Cemetery Grants Program.

Cemetery	State	Project	Amount Awarded
Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery	AZ	Establish	291,743
Middletown Veterans Cemetery	CT	Establish	682,143
Sunset Veterans Cemetery	IL	Improve	95,044
Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery	ME	Improve	216,046
Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery	MD	Establish]	
Crownsville Veterans Cemetery	MD	Establish]	2,768,229
Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery	MD	Establish]	
Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery	MD	Establish]	
Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery	MD	Expand/Improve]	
New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery	NJ	Establish	1,454,089
Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery	RI	Establish	763,781
Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery	WI	Improve	46,500
Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery	WY	Establish/Improve	1,505,119
Guam Veterans Cemetery	Guam	Establish	2,560,471
		Total	10,383,165

As of February 1987, another $1.4 million has been committed for the expansion/establishment/improvement of State Veterans Cemeteries in Delaware, Hawaii, Montana, and Rhode Island.

Locations of State Veterans Cemeteries: The site selected for the location of a state cemetery is at the option of the State being served. While the methodology is based on the rules prescribed by the Veterans Administration, the selection is affected by the availability of land, unique conditions in the State, and the efforts of interested parties for establishment at specific locations. As a result, their effectiveness in terms of ideal location or veteran population densities varies greatly.

The Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Phoenix is highly effective in location since it serves the Phoenix - Tucson area where the vast majority of the State's veterans reside. The two State veterans cemeteries in Hawaii are effectively located since they, in conjunction with the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, are considered to serve the entire area of the State. Similarly, the five State veterans cemeteries in Maryland effectively serve that State by virtue of saturation of the State's area.

Other State veterans cemeteries such as those in Rhode Island and New Jersey are within about 100 miles of virtually all of the State's veteran population since the States are small in geographic area. However, in some cases location in closer proximity to major metropolitan areas could improve effectiveness.

Sunset Veterans Cemetery in Illinois is co-located with Quincy National Cemetery on the State's border. Also, service areas overlap those for Rock Island and Camp Butler National Cemeteries. Service areas of national cemeteries with extended longevities moderately saturate the geographic area of Illinois.

However, the vast majority of the State's veterans residing in the Chicago area remain unserved by a State veterans cemetery or a national cemetery.

The wide spectrum of effectiveness of location for presently operating State veterans cemeteries is demonstrated by extremes at Sunset Veterans Cemetery in Illinois and the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Eligibility for Burial: While the Veterans Administration strongly encourages States to adopt the criteria applied to national cemeteries, the agency recognizes the importance of program flexibility. The States, therefore, have been allowed to establish eligibility criteria for interments which differ from those applicable to national cemeteries, as long as the criteria are more restrictive than those established for national cemeteries. In other words, State veterans cemeteries cannot be used for the interment of persons who are not eligible for burial in a national cemetery.

The following table reflects the eligibility requirements for those State veterans cemeteries established, expanded or improved under the grant program.

STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES
ELIGIBILITY FOR BURIAL

Interment Criteria	AZ	CT	IL	ME	MD	NJ	RI	WI	WY	GUAM
HONORABLE ACTIVE MIL. SERVICE	X	X	X/1		X	X		X	X	X
HONORABLE WAR TIME SERVICE			X	X			X/2			
SPOUSE	X	X/3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DEPENDENTS	X	X/3	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

1. One year honorable active duty
2. Campaign medals i.e., Granada and Beirut
3. Veterans must pre-decease spouse and dependents

It should be noted that all States (with the exception of Wyoming) have a residency requirement. Other States restrict eligibility to veterans who were honorably discharged and/or had wartime service.

While it is allowable for a State to limit interments, overly restrictive eligibility requirements have a tendency to diminish the State's contribution to serving the total veteran population. For example, veterans and their families may reside in the proximity of a State veterans cemetery and not be eligible for burial.

Activities in State Veterans Cemeteries: The following chart provides an overview of interment activities in thirteen (13) of the presently operating state veterans cemeteries during Fiscal Year 1986:

State Veterans Cemetery	State	FY 86 Interments Veterans	Dependents	Total
Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery	AZ	614	69	683
Middletown Veterans Cemetery	CT	140	0	140
Sunset Veterans Cemetery	IL	61	9	70
Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery	ME	319	106	425
Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery	MD	289	86	375
Crownsville Veterans Cemetery	MD	425	75	500
Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery	MD	86	14	100
Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery	MD	890	110	1,000
Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery	MD	57	18	75
New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery	NJ	361	19	380
Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery	RI	332	42	374
Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery	WI	70	10	80
Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery	WY	31	4	35
Totals		3,675	562	4,237

Interments in State veterans cemeteries vary widely from 1,000 in Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery to 35 in Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery. A similar wide range applies to interments of veterans and dependents. A total of 4,237 interments (3,675 veterans) were conducted in the 13 cemeteries during Fiscal Year 1986.

Summary: The establishment of State veterans cemeteries has benefited the veterans in those States which have participated in the program. The cemeteries also complement national cemeteries as they provide burial space for beneficiaries that probably would not have otherwise been served. The program should continue to be promoted as a viable alternative to national cemeteries in meeting the burial needs of veterans.

CHAPTER 4

VETERAN POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Introduction: In order to evaluate the current effectiveness of national cemeteries in meeting the burial needs of veterans and their dependents, and to plan for effectively meeting future needs, it is necessary to analyze demographic data and trends related to present and potential users of these burial facilities. Factors related to veteran demographics which have significant impact on planning are: veteran populations and their concentrated locations; veteran age groups; and, veteran deaths. In planning for national cemeteries, veterans' dependents (spouses) are included in the demographic analysis, as they are also potential users of the system.

Raw statistical and demographic data are provided by the VA's Office of Information Management and Statistics. This report section is to provide a profile of present and potential users of national and State veterans cemeteries.

Veteran Population: The presently estimated veteran population in the United States and Puerto Rico is 27,777,000. This population is diminishing in number through attrition; i.e., deaths of veterans are exceeding the number of new veterans generated through separation from military service. Under the stated planning assumptions, this trend is expected to continue.

Veterans, just as the general population, are not evenly distributed throughout the country but are concentrated in specific areas. A first and simple analysis

of population concentrations is to consider State veteran populations. Eight states account for nearly half (48%) of the total number of living veterans. In order, they are:

1. California	- 2,897,000	5. Florida	- 1,453,000
2. New York	- 1,902,000	6. Ohio	- 1,328,000
3. Texas	- 1,778,000	7. Illinois	- 1,287,000
4. Pennsylvania	- 1,550,000	8. Michigan	- 1,048,000

All other states have less than a 1 million veteran population.

In analyzing State veteran populations, three other significant factors must be considered: recent increases in veteran population; densities of veterans in relation to the total population; and, concentrations of veterans within States.

Since the total veteran population is decreasing, it would seem logical to assume that State veteran populations are also decreasing. For a number of reasons, including migration, this is not always the case. During the period ending March 31, 1986, eleven States showed increases in their veteran population - Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Although in almost all cases veteran population gains were quite small, they are worth note since they occurred during a time of general decrease.

State veteran population densities can be assessed in relation to the national average. Nationwide, veterans account for 158 of every 1,000 persons age 17 and over in the general civilian population. The share of veterans in the civilian

population was generally above the national average in states in the Northeast and it continued to be below average for states in the South. Two states, Alaska and Nevada, posted ratios above 200 per 1,000. The District of Columbia and Mississippi recorded the lowest ratios (123.2 per 1,000 and 129.6 per 1,000 respectivaly). For long-range planning purposes it is extremely important to identify specific geographic areas within States which have high concentrations of veterans. Veteran population concentrations can be considered to somewhat parallel those of the general civilian population. Therefore, veterans are more concentrated at or near urban and metropolitan centers and less concentrated in sparsely populated rural areas. This type of assessment in relation to veteran populations and veteran deaths will be addressed in depth later in this report.

Veteran Age Groups and Periods of Service: Veteran age groups and periods of military service are closely related and are vital in cemetery planning since burial needs are associated with the aging veteran and culminate with veteran deaths.

Periods of service are grouped into wartime veterans and peacetime veterans. The principal wartime service periods are World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict and Vietnam Era. Peacetime periods of service are the Post Vietnam Era, Service Between the Korean Conflict and Vietnam Era, and Other Peacetime Service.

Peacetime veterans make up about 20% of the total veteran population and are

generally in the younger age groups. These 5,578,000 veterans have a median age of 45.1 years. The remaining 22,199,000 wartime veterans have a median age of 56.8 years brought down somewhat by Vietnam Era veterans with a median age of only 39.2 years.

The chart on the following page provides detail on periods of service, veteran age groups, and median ages.

The largest segment of the veteran population is from the World War II period of service, 10,230,000 or 37% of all living veterans. The 5,139,000 veterans from the Korean Conflict period of service account for about 19% of all living veterans.

Although the highest median age is of World War I veterans (89.4 years), their numbers are relatively few (187,000). The median age of World War II veterans is 64.6 yesrs and for Korean Conflict veterans, it is 55.3 years. Also, 15.6 million veterans (56%) are 40-64 years old, and 5.3 million (19%) are 65 years old or over.

Of significance in cemetery planning is that the largest single segment of all living veterans (World War II), is approaching the age (median 64.6) which will create the largest and most urgent demands on burial benefits. This peak will be followed closely by the impact from the second largest segment (Korean Conflict), with a median age of 55.3 years. Excluding consideration of periods of service, the 5.3 million veterans who sre 65 years old or over further indicates that demands on burial benefits will be significant and soon.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VETERANS LIVING IN THE U.S. AND PUERTO RICO, BY AGE AND PERIOD OF SERVICE
March 31, 1986 (in thousands)

Age	Total Veterans	WARTIME VETERANS					PEACETIME VETERANS			
		Total 1/	Vietnam Era 2/	Korean Conflict 2/ 3/	World War II 3/	World War I	Total	Post Vietnam Era	Korean Conflict and Vietnam Only	Other
All Ages	27,777	22,199	8,206	5,139	10,230	187	5,578	2,180	3,013	385
Under 20 years	*						*	*		
20-24 years	405						405	405		
25-29 years	1,330	186	186				1,145	1,145		
30-34 years	1,751	1,291	1,291				460	460		
35-39 years	3,422	3,293	3,293				129	104	25	
40-44 years	2,757	2,129	2,129				629	31	597	
45-49 years	2,431	816	612	237			1,615	20	1,595	
50-54 years	3,038	2,259	304	2,135	18		779	10	719	51
55-59 years	3,523	3,362	232	1,960	1,664		162	3	59	99
60-64 years	3,866	3,819	117	426	3,733		47	*	9	38
65-69 years	2,848	2,807	67	236	2,783		41		4	37
70-74 years	1,331	1,280	21	92	1,269		52		3	49
75-79 years	623	573	6	37	567		50		1	49
80-84 years	211	169	2	12	154	12	42		1	41
85 years and over	239	218	1	3	42	175	21		*	21
Median Age	53.1	56.8	39.2	55.3	64.6	89.4	45.1	28.0	47.8	65.7

NOTE: Excluded are 327,000 veterans whose only active-duty military service occurred since September 8, 1980, and who failed to satisfy the minimum service requirement. Also excluded are a small indeterminate number of National Guard personnel or reservists who incurred service-connected disabilities while on an initial tour of active duty for training only. Detail may not add to total shown due to rounding.

* Less than 0.5 (thousand)

1/ Veterans who served in both World War II and the Korean conflict, or in both the Korean conflict and the Vietnam era, are counted only once.

2/ Includes 634 (thousand) who served in bot the Korean conflict and the Vietnam era.

3/ Includes 984 (thousand) who served in both World War II and the Korean conflict

Veteran Demographic Trends: The present veteran population is decreasing in number and increasing in median age. The fact that the overall number of veteran deaths is exceeding the number of new veterans generated by separation from active military duty is implicit in terms of cemetery planning. For the purpose of this report, trends in veteran demographics are presented in terms of estimated conditions in the years 2000 and 2020. Some charts and graphs extend indicators outside of these parameters to better demonstrate trends.

The chart on the following page provides an overview of the veteran population, median ages, and veteran deaths for milestone years.

In 2000, it is estimated that the veteran population will be about 23,951,000, a 14% decrease from today's population. It is expected to have a median age of about 58.1 years. By 2020, it is estimated that the veteran population will decrease to about 16,917,000, a 39% decrease from today's population. By then the median age will have increased to about 62.5 years.

To further highlight this trend, the veteran population in 2030 is expected to be only about 14,440,000; a 48% decrease from today's population, and the median age is expected to be 58.3 years. The inversion in median age after 2020 is consistent with peak veteran deaths which is addressed later in this section.

The overall decrease in veteran population is associated with periods of service and median age groups. The depletion of World War II period of service veterans who now have a median age of 64.6 years will have the most significant and

ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATION, MEDIAN AGE AND DEATHS

Year	Veteran Population 1/	Median Age	Veteran Deaths 1/
1986	27,777	53.1	426.8
1987	27,579	53.5	438.1
1988	27,369	54.1	449.7
1989	27,148	54.6	461.5
1990	26,914	55.1	473.6
1995	25,567	56.7	532.9
2000	23,951	58.1	581.2
2005	22,163	59.6	604.5
2010	20,316	61.7	610.6
2015	18,523	62.8	587.4
2020	16,917	62.5	542.1
2025	15,558	60.2	491.9
2030	14,440	58.3	445.3

1/ In thousands

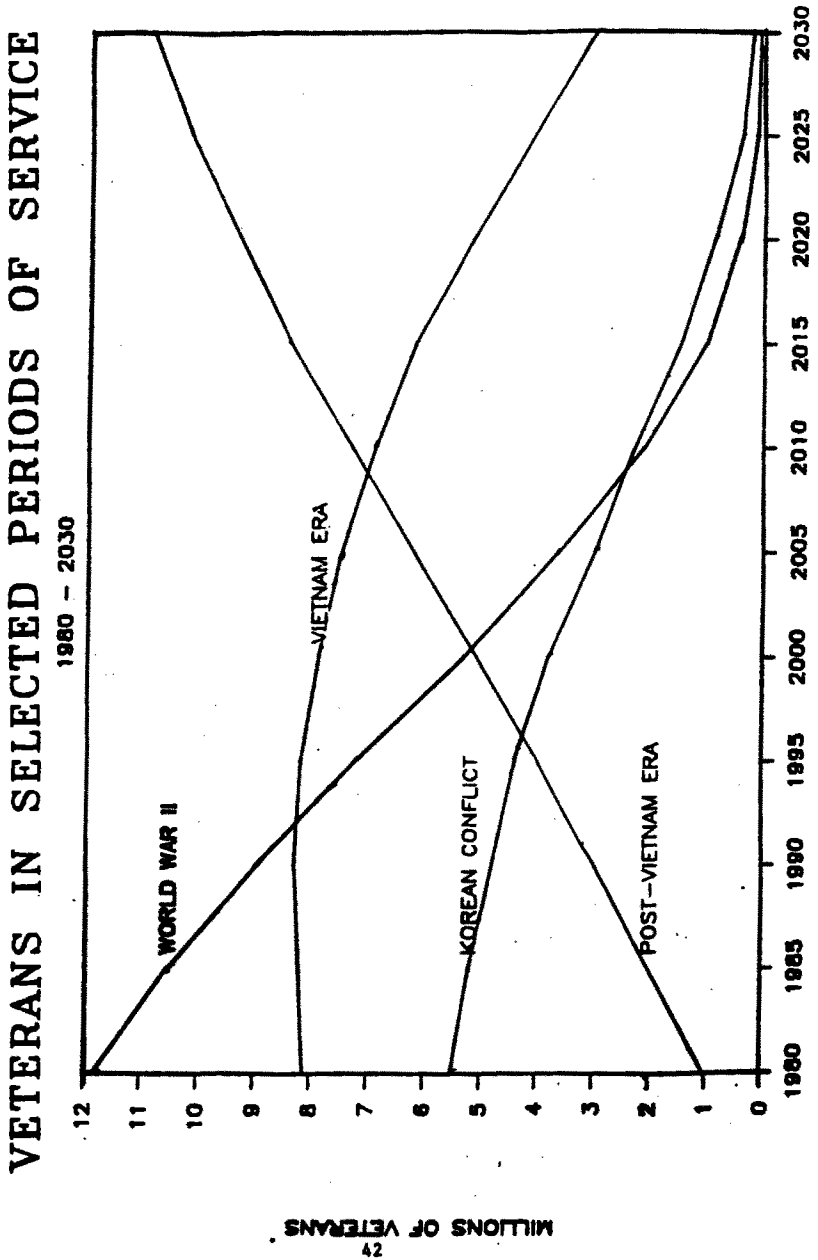
immediate impact on the decrease in the veteran population. The graph on the following page depicts projected veterans in selected periods of service for milestone years. It graphically demonstrates the progressive depletion in population for all periods of service except the Post-Vietnam Era.

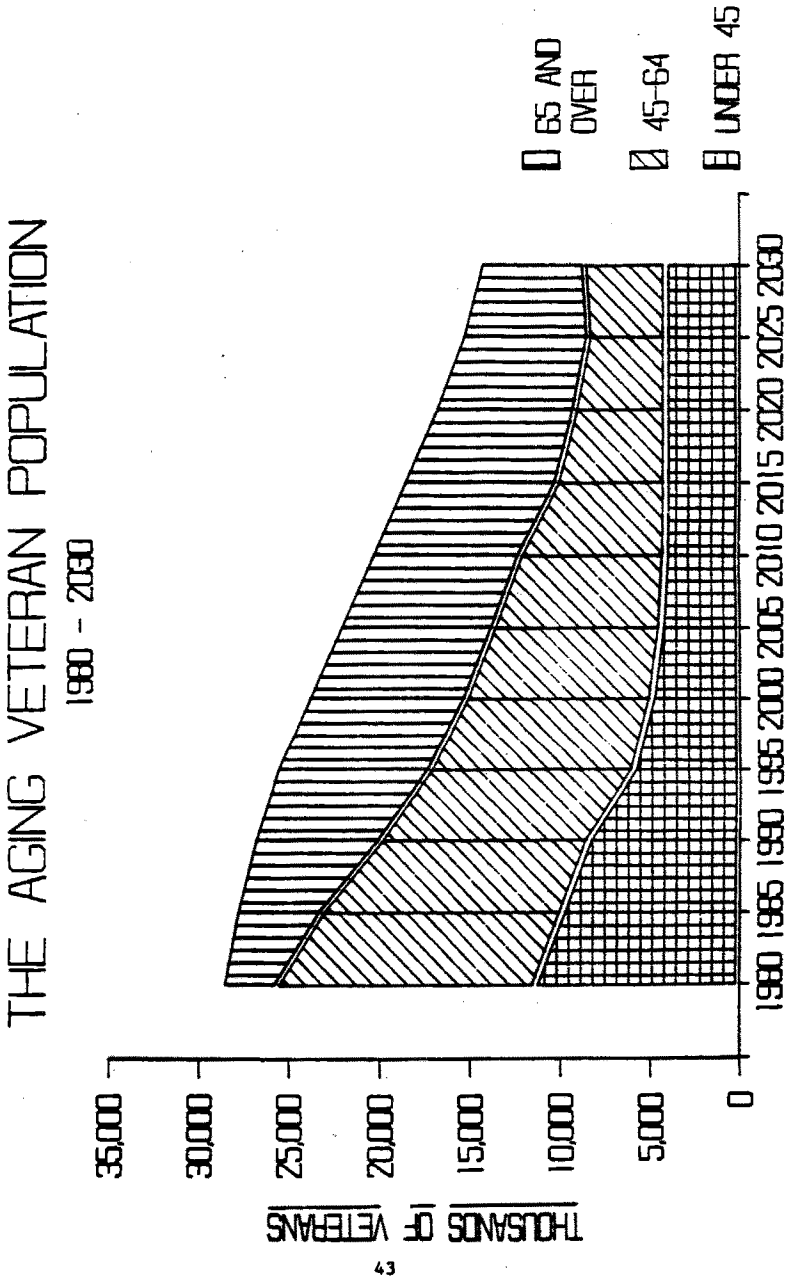
The makeup of present and future veteran populations in relation to age groups is provided on the graph on page 43 which depicts the aging veteran population. The under 45 year old age group will decrease in relation to the total veteran population until about 1995, after which it will remain relatively constant. Of most significance is the 65 year old and over age group which will gain and remain relatively high in proportion to all veterans.

Although monitoring the entire veteran population and all age groups is necessary, the older veterans 65 years old and over are of most importance in cemetery planning since they represent potential immediate impact on the system. The chart on page 44 provides a graphic illustration of increase in this veteran age group.

The present population of veterans 65 years old and over is about 5.3 million and will increase to its peak of about 8.9 million in 2000. It will then generally decrease to about 7.7 million in 2020.

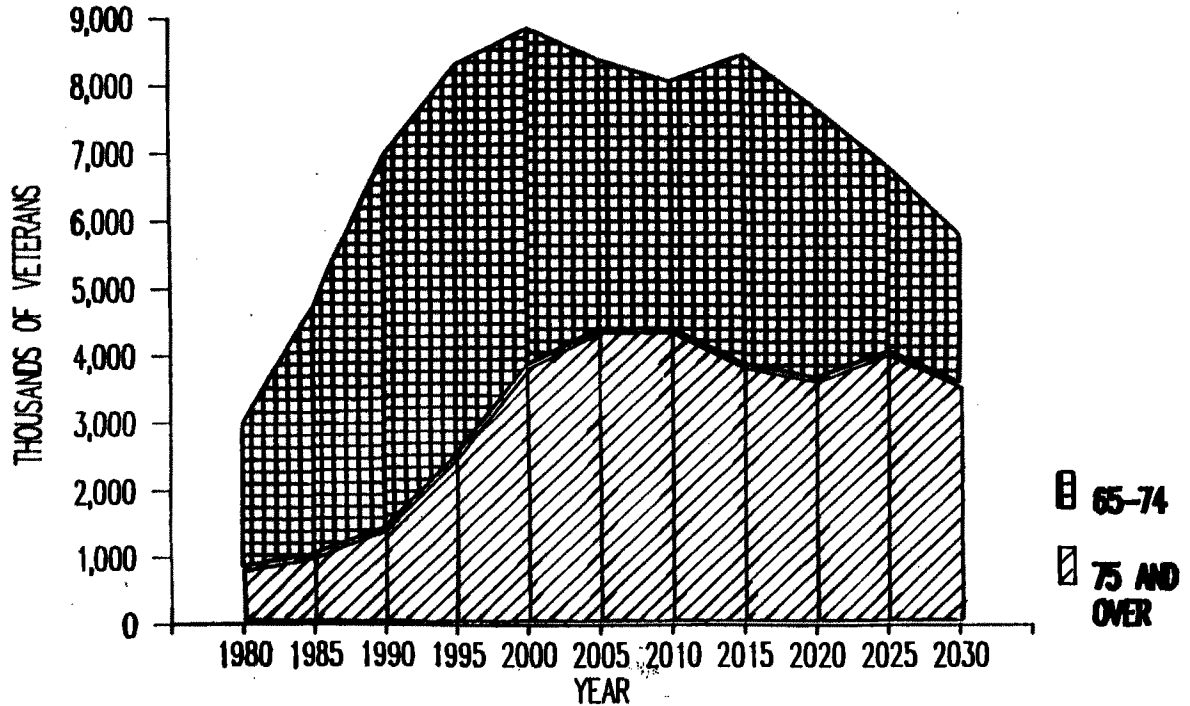
The 75 years old and over age group will increase from its present 1,073,000 to about 3,807,000 in 2000. The peak in veteran population in this age group will occur in about 2005 after which it will decrease only slightly to 3,628,000 in 2020.


VETERANS IN SELECTED PERIODS OF SERVICE
1980 - 2030
WORLD WAR II
VIETNAM ERA
KOREAN CONFLICT
POST-VIETNAM ERA
MILLIONS OF VETERANS
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
1980
1985
1990
1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
2020
2025
2030


THE AGING VETERAN POPULATION
1980 - 2030
65 AND OVER
45-64
UNDER 45
THOUSANDS OF VETERANS
35,000
30,000
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020 2025 2030
YEAR

VETERANS 65 YEARS OLD AND OVER

1980 – 2030



The significant increase in veterans 65 years old and over between now and 2000; the minimal decrease in their numbers between 2000 and 2020; and geographic areas where significant increase in their numbers can be expected, have direct correlation with expected interment workloads in the system.

Potential Users of National Cemeteries: As stated earlier, users of national cemeteries extend beyond veterans to their spouses and certain dependents. In order to fully assess demands on the system it is necessary to evaluate the extent of potential users of national cemeteries.

Although good supportable data are available on present and projected veteran populations, age groups and deaths, information on veterans' dependents is less readily available. Based on past surveys of veterans, it is estimated that about 78% of all living veterans are married. This factor can be applied to present and estimated future veteran populations as a whole since the marital status of the older age group and younger age group veterans tend to offset each other.

The present 27,777,000 living veterans then represent an estimated 49,443,000 potential users of national cemeteries when considering spouses. In 2000, the 23,951,000 living veterans will represent about 42,633,000 potential users; and in 2020, the 16,917,000 living veterans will represent about 30,112,000 potential users.

These additional potential users of burial facilities are considered when

projecting future interment workloads and in identifying peak periods of demand on the system.

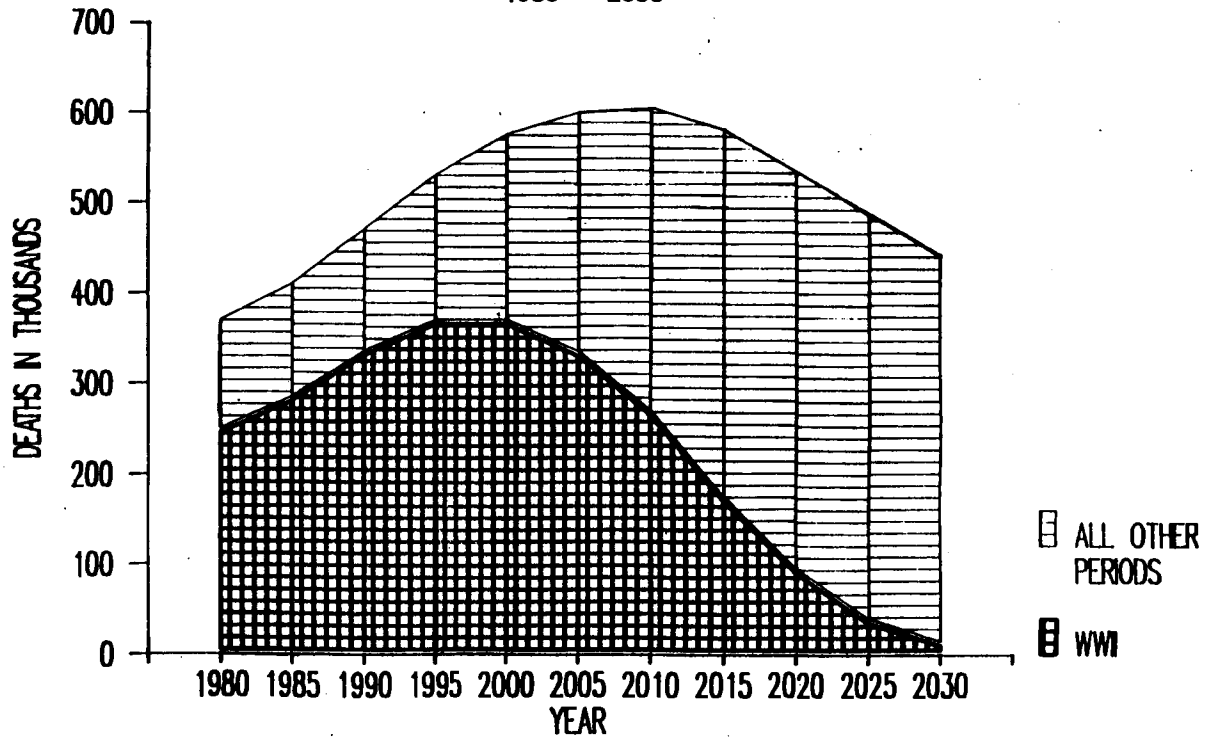
Veteran Deaths: Projected veteran deaths represent the most significant factor in planning for cemeteries since deaths, in combination with the degree to which families of decedents participate in the program, provide direct indicators of expected interment workloads. The graph on the following page depicts expected veteran deaths through the planning period.

It is estimated that there were about 426,800 veteran deaths during 1986. About 70.4% of these deaths were of veterans who resided within about 100 miles from an open national cemetery. During the year 2000, it is estimated that about 581,180 veteran deaths will occur, a 36% increase over 1986. During the period 1987 through 2000, an estimated 7,187,360 veteran deaths will occur. Veteran deaths will continue to increase annually until about 2010 when it is estimated that about 610,610 veteran deaths will occur annually. They will then decrease to about 542,140 in 2020. Cumulative veteran deaths during this 20-year period are estimated at 11,801,380. During the entire planning period covered in this report (1987 through 2020) total veteran deaths are expected to be about 18,988,740 or about 68% of all presently living veterans.

Summary: Veteran populations and demographics discussed in this section indicate future conditions which will have significant impact on national cemeteries and federally supported burial benefits. Although the veteran population is decreasing, interment workloads in national cemeteries are expected to

VETERAN DEATHS BY YEAR

1980 – 2030



increase greatly due to escalating veteran and dependent deaths. The annual number of veteran deaths will peak about 2010.

Based on the information discussed, demands on national cemeteries and State veteran cemeteries will increase significantly in the next thirty-four years. The degree to which these demands can be met in the future is discussed later in this report.

CHAPTER 5

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM

Background: The effectiveness of the National Cemetery System and State veterans cemeteries is assessed on the basis of the degree to which the benefit for burial is made available and used by the veteran population as a whole. In evaluating effectiveness of the system, it is necessary to analyze cemeteries individually and as categorized groups of cemeteries.

For the purpose of this report, categories of cemeteries that will be considered are:

- Closed national cemeteries
- Open national cemeteries
- State veteran cemeteries

Four primary factors influence the effectiveness of cemeteries:

- Their demographic appropriateness of geographic location
- Their expected longevity of operations
- Restrictiveness of eligibility requirements
- Veteran participation in the program

Most of these factors are interdependent and effects from one will influence others.

Effectiveness can be further assessed in two areas of concern, the extent to which grave space is made realistically available as a result of its proximity to potential users, and the degree to which potential users take advantage of the grave space made available to them. This report will concentrate on the extent to which grave space is made realistically available to users and identification of geographic areas where grave space is not realistically available.

Demographic Appropriateness of Geographic Location: The geographic location of a cemetery facility in relation to potential users' places of residence is the single most influencing factor on use of that facility and therefore the effectiveness of that facility in delivering the burial benefit. The degree of use of a facility is directly related to its distance from veterans' residences.

Due to the permanence and finality of burial of a family member during a time of emotional stress, survivors usually do not consider interment of a loved one a great distance from their home. Also, survivors' desires for frequent visitation to the grave of a loved one tend to discourage burial a long way from the place of residence.

Experience shows that to expect any appreciable number of burials of decedents whose families reside beyond about 100 miles from a facility is unrealistic. Therefore, planning and evaluation of cemetery activities is predicated on the extent of the veteran population segment that resides within specified distances from facilities.

Geographic planning areas are identified as Primary Service Areas (PSA) and Secondary Service Areas (SSA). The PSA comprises the area within a 50-mile radius from the cemetery. The SSA is the area outside of the PSA and within about a 100-mile radius from the cemetery. Since veteran statistics are available by counties, it is considered that if a service area intersects a county, that entire county's veteran population is included.

Counties within PSAs and SSAs have been identified for all national and State veterans cemeteries. By analyzing the segment of the veteran population whose place of residence is within these service areas, a statement can be made as to each cemetery's contribution to the system's effectiveness. By analyzing the broad coverage of all cemeteries, a statement can be made as to the overall effectiveness of the system in making burial space available to the veteran population as a whole.

Expected Longevity of Operations: Many national cemeteries trace their beginnings to Civil War days. Others were established in conjunction with early military posts, battles, prison camps and hospitals. Their establishment in

terms of size and location was to meet the needs of the times and they remain hallowed institutions and national monuments. However, in some cases their location is not effective to meet the needs of today's veterans.

Some closed national cemeteries continue to inter family members in already occupied graves but do not make significant contributions to meeting present day and anticipated burial needs. Since the veteran or his/her first family member is already interred in the cemetery and since grave space is available for subsequent burial of the surviving eligible family member, it can be considered that it is a "veteran family served" in terms of grave space. This condition does not apply to interments of cremated remains. Closed national cemeteries can offer full service to veteran families through interments of cremated remains in garden niches.

Closed national cemeteries continue to make a contribution to their local communities and are often a source of local pride. However, in terms of meeting long-term burial needs, their contribution is minimal. In assessing resources to meet present and future veteran burial needs, emphasis is placed on conditions at open national cemeteries.

Since open national cemeteries contain the resources for meeting veterans' future burial needs, the length of time they can be expected to remain open has significant impact on long-range planning. The extent of available gravesite resources in open national cemeteries, which determines their expected longevity, is an indicator of their abilities to contribute to the effectiveness of the system into the future.

Restrictiveness of Eligibility Requirements: Eligibility requirements for interment in national cemeteries are uniform and liberal. They extend to virtually all veterans with acceptable military service, their spouses, and certain other family members. Interment can be in any national cemetery having available gravespace for any eligible family member. These criteria provide for availability of the benefit without regards to place or duration of residency, or other limiting conditions. Eligibility requirements for interment in national cemeteries do not have an impact on the effectiveness of the system in terms of use of facilities.

Since States establish their own criteria, eligibility requirements for interment in State veteran cemeteries are not uniform. Generally, they tend to be more restrictive than those for national cemeteries. This restrictiveness has a diminishing effect on participation and the degree to which they are able to complement national cemeteries.

Veteran Participation: Although unoccupied gravespace may be readily available to eligible veterans and their dependents, all eligible decedents' families do not elect to use the facilities. Participation is assessed on the basis of veteran interments for a specific time period compared to veteran deaths which occur during the same time period.

Using this method of assessment in a broad sense, nationwide participation rates are arrived at by determining total annual veteran deaths and total annual veteran interments in all national cemeteries. Past fiscal year indicators for national cemeteries are as follows:

Fiscal Year	Veteran Deaths 1/	Veteran Interments 1/	Percent of Participation
1977	324.2	26.5	8.17
1978	337.3	26.1	7.73
1979	350.6	28.5	8.07
1980	364.5	29.5	8.09
1981	378.4	30.2	7.98
1982	392.3	30.0	7.64
1983	403.1	32.4	8.03
1984	413.6	34.1	8.24
1985	424.3	36.8	8.67
1986	435.4	38.0	8.73

1/ In Thousands

The degree to which eligible veterans have participated on a system-wide basis is not indicative of localized participation nor is it, in itself, a conclusive measurement of program effectiveness. Each open cemetery has localized conditions which affect participation in that facility.

There are two primary conditions which affect participation in individual cemeteries, those which involve the physical or institutional aspects of the facility itself, and those which are perpetuated through customs and traditions, and other influences not directly related to the program. Most significant of those related to the program are eligibility requirements and the location of the facility which have already been discussed.

Other factors affecting participation are:

- Discretionary Barriers. Often there are various ethnic, religious and/or ancestral enclaves within a specific region. State boundaries tend to establish congruous limitations and inter-socioeconomic barriers. Again, due to the highly sensitive and emotional nature of burial, these enclaves and barriers may not be crossed when burying a family member. For example, a family residing in a particular State for a great length of time or who are natives of the State may have close personal or emotional ties to that State. As a result of these ties, they may not cross State boundaries to bury a loved one even though a burial facility may be relatively close but in another State.

- Public Consciousness. The public's awareness of the existence of the VA national cemetery burial benefit is a factor which has very obvious and significant impact on participation. Information gathered through a survey of veterans in 1979 indicated that only about 50% of veterans were aware of benefits for burial in a national cemetery. Localized awareness is thought to be considerably higher than that indicated in the survey.

- Localized Perception. Local opinion, interest and pride in facilities may vary from one area to another. Those where local interest and pride are demonstrated through involvement by the public, service organizations, local interest groups, etc., may have higher participation as a result of enhanced public opinion through its perception and image of the facility.

- Economic Conditions. Since interment in a national cemetery provides family burial space, monumentation and perpetual care at no cost to the veteran family, participation can be influenced by prevailing economic conditions. In periods or localities with high unemployment or otherwise depressed economic conditions, or in areas where local private burial costs are comparatively high, participation in national cemetery burial benefits can be expected to increase.

To provide indications of participation at individual national cemeteries, 20 leading open cemeteries in terms of total interments in FY 1986 are indicated on the following chart. These cemeteries represent about 69% of the 52,220 system-wide interments conducted in 1986.

	National Cemetery	Veterans Deaths (PSA and SSA)	Veterans Interments	Participation Indicator
1.	Calverton, NY	36,820	5,422	14.7
2.	Riverside, CA	26,270	4,260	16.2
3.	Ft. Snelling, MN	7,040	2,207	31.3
4.	Jefferson Barracks, MO	5,540	1,977	35.7
5.	Willamette, OR	5,920	1,757	29.7
6.	Ft. Sam Houston, TX	5,020	1,539	30.7
7.	Ft. Logan, CO	4,440	1,321	29.8
8.	Houston, TX	6,420	1,230	19.2
9.	Bay Pines, FL	8,380	983	11.7
10.	Puerto Rico, PR	1,620	726	44.8

	National Cemetery	Veteran Deaths (PSA and SSA)	Veteran Interments	Participation Indicator
11.	Massachusetts, MA	14,610	836	5.7
12.	Wood, WI	16,640	827	5.0
13.	Ft. Bliss, TX	1,110	590	53.2
14.	Santa Fe, NM	1,600	648	40.5
15.	Memphis, TN	2,010	605	30.1
16.	NMCP,HI	1,320	548	41.5
17.	Leavenworth, KS	4,700	577	12.3
18.	Indiantown Gap, PA	19,840	611	3.1
19.	Quantico, VA	12,740	492	3.9
20.	Chattanooga, TN	2,660	410	15.4
	Totals	184,700	27,566	

The above participation indicators are determined by the number of veteran interments conducted during the year in conjunction with the estimated number of veteran deaths which occurred during the year in counties within the PSA and SSA of a given cemetery. Collectively, participation in the leading national cemeteries indicates a rate of 14.9%.

Similar indicators are provided for operating State veteran cemeteries:

State Cemetery	Veteran Deaths (PSA and SSA)	Veteran Interment	Participation Indicator
Arizona Veterans Memorial, AZ	6,072	614	10.1
Middletown Veterans Cemetery, CT	6,533	140	2.1
Hawaii Veterans Cemetery, HI 1/	3/	56	3/
Kauai Veterans Cemetery, HI 1/	3/	11	3/
Sunset Veterans Cemetery, IL	897	61	6.8
Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery, MD	4/	289	4/
Crownsville Veterans Cemetery, MD	4/	425	4/
Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery, MD	4/	86	4/
Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery, MD	4/	890	4/
Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery, MD	4/	57	4/
Maine Veterans Memorial Cemetery, ME	2,292	319	13.9
New Jersey Veterans Memorial Cemetery, NJ	15,233	361	2.4
Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery, RI	2,132	332	15.6
Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, WI	4,439	70	1.6
Oregon Trail State Veterans Cemetery, WY	573	31	5.4
Guam Veterans Cemetery, GUAM 2/			
Totals	47,618	3,742	

1/ Cemetery in operation but grant development in progress

2/ Statistical information not readily available

3/ The two State veteran cemeteries in Hawaii are considered to serve the entire State. The two cemeteries combined, interred 67 veterans; 4.8% of the 1,406 total veteran deaths.

4/ The five State veterans cemeteries in Maryland are considered to serve the entire State. The five cemeteries combined, interred 1,747 veterans; 21.7% of the 8,041 total veteran deaths.

Collectively, participation in the State veteran cemetery network indicates a rate of 7.9%. Individually, with few exceptions, participation indicators for State veteran cemeteries are lower than for open national cemeteries. This can be generally attributed to the State veteran cemeteries' restrictive eligibility requirements and in some cases their geographic location at or near State boundaries.

Although analyses of participation are important in assessing the degree to which veterans are using available resources, of more relavence to this report is the extent to which unoccupied, uncommitted grave space is made available to the veteran population. This type of assessment logically leads to indentification of the segment and location of the veteran population not being reasonably served by national or State veterans cemeteries. For the purpose of this report, "reasonably" served is defined as the segment of the veteran population having an open facility within about 100 miles of their place of residence.

Presently, about 19.2 million living veterans or about 69% of the total veteran population reside within about 100 miles of an open national cemetery. About 10.7 million living veterans (38%) reside within about 50 miles of an open national cemetery.

About 3.0 million living veterans reside within about 100 miles of an operating State veterans cemetery or are considered reasonably served due to saturation of a state by such facilities (Hawaii and Maryland). In some cases, the servica

areas for State veterans cemeteries are restricted by State boundaries due to eligibility criteria. Also, in some cases national and State veterans cemeteries are in close geographic proximity and service areas overlap. In such cases, veterans are double counted for State veterans cemeteries in the above analogy; i.e., they are indicated to reside in the service areas of both national and State veterans cemeteries.

Presently, there is no supportable alternative to double counting veterans who reside within service areas of both State and national cemeteries. It is known that these groups of veterans are served by national cemeteries. However, the degree to which they are served by State veterans cemeteries under more restrictive eligibility criteria is unknown. The issue of double counting is complex and beyond the scope of this report.

To provide indicators of location effectiveness, each open national cemetery and State veterans cemetery is analyzed as to the degree of its contribution to serving the veteran population as a whole; i.e., the number of veterans who reside in the service areas of each facility and the percentage of the total veteran population this represents. Charts on the following two pages provide indicators for each facility. Collectively, about 69% of the veteran population reside within the service areas of open national cemeteries. Almost 11% reside within service areas of State veterans cemeteries, although some of these veterans are double counted for State veterans cemeteries.

OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES 1986
PRESENT VETERAN POPULATIONS BY SERVICE AREAS

CEMETERY	STATE	PSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	SSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	TOTAL	% OF TOT VETERANS
Alexandria	LA	30,705	0.1%	60,132	0.2%	90,837	0.3%
Barrancas	FL	98,560	0.4%	13,778	0.0%	112,338	0.4%
Bath	NY	182,898	0.7%	335,776	1.2%	518,674	1.9%
Bay Pines	FL	355,088	1.3%	63,717	0.2%	418,805	1.5%
Beaufort	SC	118,238	0.4%	77,633	0.3%	195,871	0.7%
Biloxi	MS	64,157	0.2%	3,682	0.0%	67,839	0.2%
Black Hills	SD	17,587	0.1%	7,553	0.0%	25,140	0.1%
Calverton	NY	1,140,773	4.1%	998,624	3.6%	2,139,397	7.7%
Camp Butler	IL	94,021	0.3%	127,626	0.5%	221,647	0.8%
Camp Nelson	KY	65,535	0.2%	35,038	0.1%	100,573	0.4%
Chattanooga	TN	81,606	0.3%	114,073	0.4%	195,679	0.7%
Corinth	MS	58,626	0.2%	52,467	0.2%	111,093	0.4%
Culpeper	VA	48,301	0.2%	29,464	0.1%	77,765	0.3%
Danville	IL	116,909	0.4%	62,136	0.2%	179,045	0.6%
Dayton	OH	364,184	1.3%	239,247	0.9%	603,431	2.2%
Eagle Point	OR	60,940	0.2%	58,513	0.2%	119,453	0.4%
Fayetteville	AR	26,320	0.1%	4,460	0.0%	30,780	0.1%
Florence	SC	55,171	0.2%	50,835	0.2%	106,006	0.4%
Florida	FL	289,938	1.0%	79,394	0.3%	369,332	1.3%
Ft. Bayard	NM	21,486	0.1%	32,299	0.1%	53,785	0.2%
Ft. Bliss	TX	70,670	0.3%	9,004	0.0%	79,674	0.3%
Ft. Custer	MI	254,020	0.9%	718,048	2.6%	972,068	3.5%
Ft. Gibson	OK	140,727	0.5%	60,419	0.2%	201,146	0.7%
Ft. Logan	CO	323,260	1.2%	29,005	0.1%	352,265	1.3%
Ft. Lyon	CO	7,512	0.0%	29,889	0.1%	37,401	0.1%
Ft. McPherson	NE	5,728	0.0%	19,211	0.1%	24,939	0.1%
Ft. Mitchell	AL	72,299	0.3%	470,520	1.7%	542,819	2.0%
Ft. Richardson	AK	44,641	0.2%	19,743	0.1%	64,384	0.2%
Ft. Sam Houston	TX	166,054	0.6%	118,019	0.4%	284,073	1.0%
Ft. Scott	KS	21,563	0.1%	24,343	0.1%	45,906	0.2%
Ft. Smith	AR	33,331	0.1%	25,991	0.1%	59,322	0.2%
Ft. Snelling	MN	319,978	1.2%	160,258	0.6%	480,236	1.7%
Hampton	VA	157,318	0.6%	37,182	0.1%	194,500	0.7%
Houston	TX	451,169	1.6%	54,827	0.2%	505,996	1.8%
Indiantown Gap	PA	480,879	1.7%	752,946	2.7%	1,233,825	4.4%
Jefferson Barracks	MO	317,289	1.1%	47,539	0.2%	364,828	1.3%
Keokuk	IA	28,769	0.1%	29,933	0.1%	58,702	0.2%
Knoxville	TN	88,378	0.3%	8,927	0.0%	97,305	0.4%
Leavenworth	KS	263,758	0.9%	38,998	0.1%	302,756	1.1%
Lebanon	KY	15,099	0.1%	14,957	0.1%	30,056	0.1%
Little Rock	AR	97,086	0.3%	24,372	0.1%	121,458	0.4%
Marion	IN	278,916	1.0%	54,238	0.2%	333,154	1.2%
Massachusetts	MA	331,357	1.2%	558,577	2.0%	889,934	3.2%
Memphis	TN	116,154	0.4%	21,073	0.1%	137,227	0.5%
Mill Springs	KY	28,076	0.1%	11,677	0.0%	39,753	0.1%
Mound City	IL	31,520	0.1%	10,325	0.0%	41,845	0.2%
Mountain Home	TN	152,858	0.6%	62,580	0.2%	215,438	0.8%
N.M.C.P.	HI	79,638	0.3%	22,113	0.1%	101,751	0.4%
Nashville	TN	142,795	0.5%	24,989	0.1%	167,784	0.6%
Natchez	MS	10,938	0.0%	23,255	0.1%	34,193	0.1%
New Albany	IN	60,146	0.2%	72,640	0.3%	132,786	0.5%
New Bern	NC	39,855	0.1%	8,433	0.0%	48,288	0.2%
Port Hudson	LA	77,231	0.3%	192,294	0.7%	269,525	1.0%
Puerto Rico	PR	125,170	0.5%	0	0.0%	125,170	0.5%
Quantico	VA	536,311	1.9%	337,203	1.2%	873,514	3.1%
Quincy	IL	30,711	0.1%	22,182	0.1%	52,893	0.2%
Raleigh	NC	172,100	0.6%	32,860	0.1%	204,960	0.7%
Riverside	CA	463,940	1.7%	1,227,197	4.4%	1,691,137	6.1%
Rock Island	IL	96,568	0.3%	121,295	0.4%	217,863	0.8%
Salisbury	NC	282,888	1.0%	102,845	0.4%	385,733	1.4%
Santa Fe	NM	90,760	0.3%	27,017	0.1%	117,777	0.4%
Sitka	AK	7,216	0.0%	991	0.0%	8,207	0.0%
Springfield	MO	74,559	0.3%	24,248	0.1%	98,807	0.4%
West Virginia	WV	44,986	0.2%	101,396	0.4%	146,382	0.5%
Willamette	OR	250,864	0.9%	152,489	0.5%	403,353	1.5%
Wilmington	NC	41,225	0.1%	7,673	0.0%	48,898	0.2%
Wood	WI	349,632	1.3%	161,268	0.6%	510,900	1.8%
Zachary Taylor	KY	110,538	0.4%	36,339	0.1%	146,877	0.5%
TOTALS:		10,677,503	38.4%	8,557,775	30.8%	19,235,278	69.2%

OPERATING STATE VETERAN CEMETERIES - 1986

STATE VETERAN CEMETERY	STATE	PRESENT VETERAN POPULATIONS BY SERVICE AREAS: PSA	% OF TOT-VET	SSA	% OF TOT-VET	TOTAL	% OF TOT-VET
OPEN							
Arizona Veterans Memorial	AZ	260,725	0.9%	114,637	0.4%	375,362	1.4%
Middletown Veterans	CT	400,603	1.4%	0	0.0%	400,603	1.4%
Hawaii Veterans 1/	HI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kauai Veterans 1/	HI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HI-STATE-TOTAL		14,590	0.1%	87,161	0.3%	101,751	0.4%
Sunset (Quincy)	IL	30,711	0.1%	22,182	0.1%	52,893	0.2%
Cheltenham Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Crownsville Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eastern Shore Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Garrison Forest Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Gap Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MD-STATE-TOTAL		537,142	1.9%	0	0.0%	537,142	1.9%
Maine Veterans Memorial	ME	119,252	0.4%	26,542	0.1%	145,794	0.5%
NJ Vet. Memorial(Arneytown)	NJ	528,684	1.9%	374,863	1.3%	903,547	3.3%
Rhode Island Veterans	RI	122,261	0.4%	0	0.0%	122,261	0.4%
Wisconsin Veterans Memorial	WI	116,856	0.4%	196,067	0.7%	312,923	1.1%
Oregon Trail State Veterans	WY	22,058	0.1%	24,128	0.1%	46,186	0.2%
Guam Veterans	GUAM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTALS		2,152,882	7.8%	845,580	3.0%	2,998,462	10.8%

1/ Grant is in process

Although a substantial number of veterans reside in the service areas of State veterans cemeteries, the number of those who meet eligibility requirements is not readily determined. It is it safe to say thet the number of veterans and dependents who are eligible is less than the total.

The map on the following page provides a graphic overview of areas will be reasonably served by open national cemeteries, operating State veteran cemeteries and by the two networks combined in 1990.

It is obvious that a large geographic portion of the United States is not reasonably served be either a national or State veterans cemetery. At the same time, some areas of the country are doubly served by both national and State cemeteries.

As discuesed earlier, the status of national and State veterans cemeteries is not static in terms of the number of facilities and their status. Cemeteries in both systems will close as available gravesites are depleted. New State veteran cemeteries will become operational as applications are received and approved. The National Cemetery System will expand with new national cemeteries soon to become operational in Florida and West Virginia. These new cemeteries will make contributions to the effectiveness of location in terms of the system as a whole. Also, environmental studies are underway for establishing a new national cemetery to serve Northern California. This cemetery would also make a significant contribution to effectiveness of location.

COUNTIES INCLUDED IN NATIONAL AND/OR STATE CEMETERY SERVICE AREAS
In 1990
COUNTY INCLUDED IN
NATIONAL SERVICE AREA
STATE CEMETERY AREA
BOTH
NOT INCLUDED
OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAG
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Between the present time and the year 2020, a number of open national cemeteries will close. Projected closures are determined by applying expected gravesite usage to gravesite availability (developed and potential in undeveloped land). The projected depletion of unoccupied, uncommitted grave space determines expected closure. Projected closures of presently open national cemeteries are as follows:

Closures Between 1987 and 2000:

Bay Pines, FL	1987	New Bern, NC	1991
Wilmington, NC	1987	Port Hudson, LA	1991
Fayetteville, AR	1988	Raleigh, NC	1991
Little Rock, AR	1988	Alexandria, LA	1992
Zachary Taylor, KY	1988	Natchez, MS	1992
Hampton, VA	1989	Rock Island, IL	1994
Knoxville, TN	1989	Santa Fe, NM	1994
NMCP, HI	1989	Biloxi, MS	1995
Memphis, TN	1991	Hill Springs, KY	1997
Nashville, TN	1991	Wood, WI	1997
		Ft. Smith, AR	1998

Closures Between 2000 and 2020:

Quincy, IL	2000	Salisbury, NC	2008
*Willamette, OR	2001	Florence, SC	2012
Ft. Sam Houston, TX	2002	Ft. Gibson, OK	2014
New Albany, IN	2005	Beaufort, SC	2018
Springfield, MO	2005	Ft. Scott, KS	2019
Barrancas, FL	2006	Camp Nelson, KY	2020
Dayton, OH	2006	Chattanooga, TN	2020
		Mound City, IL	2020

* Regional cemetery for SFR X

Closures are estimated under the premise that additional land will not be acquired to extend the longevities of cemeteries.

Closures of presently open national cemeteries will have significant negative impact on the system-wide effectiveness of grave space distribution in the future.

Situation in 2000 - Between 1987 and 2000, twenty-one (21) national cemeteries will close (see page 65). All presently operating State veterans cemeteries are expected to remain operational beyond the year 2000. Two additional cemeteries are expected to become operational by then; Delaware Veterans Cemetery and Fort Harrison Veterans Cemetery, Montana.

Charts on the following two pages provide indicators of veteran population coverage for each facility and the percentage of the total veteran population this represents. Collectively, the veteran population within the service areas of the 47 national cemeteries open at that time will be reduced to about 14.4 million or about 60% of all veterans at that time. Coverage for State veterans cemeteries will increase only slightly to almost 12%.

The map on page 70 depicts the geographic coverage of the system in 2000. Additional areas not served by open national cemeteries or State veterans cemeteries are evident when compared with the map for present conditions on page 64.

Situation in 2020 - Between 2000 and 2020, fifteen (15) additional national cemeteries will close, one of which is the regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region X, Willamette National Cemetery, Oregon. At that time, only about 8.2 million veterans or about 49% of all veterans will reside within the service area of an open national cemetery which is a decline of 20% from the present. The chart on page 71 provides a breakdown for the veteran population coverage by the 32 national cemeteries that will remain open in 2020. Long-range expansion of the State veterans cemetery network cannot be predicted since participation in the program is voluntary on the part of individual States. It is assumed that all State veterans cemeteries in operation in 2000 will remain operational in 2020 and their effectiveness will remain constant.

OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES 2000

ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATIONS BY SERVICE AREAS (YEAR 2000)

CEMETERY	STATE	PSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	SSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	TOTAL	% OF TOT VETERANS
Barrancas	FL	93,124	0.4%	11,368	0.0%	104,492	0.4%
Bath	NY	142,198	0.6%	248,147	1.0%	390,345	1.6%
Beaufort	SC	119,031	0.5%	73,252	0.3%	192,283	0.8%
Black Hills	SD	16,687	0.1%	6,609	0.0%	23,296	0.1%
Calverton	NY	897,710	3.7%	811,997	3.4%	1,709,707	7.1%
Camp Butler	IL	68,638	0.3%	108,156	0.5%	176,794	0.7%
Camp Nelson	KY	61,284	0.3%	45,517	0.2%	106,801	0.4%
Chattanooga	TN	78,629	0.3%	130,307	0.5%	208,936	0.9%
Corinth	MS	52,596	0.2%	53,886	0.2%	106,482	0.4%
Culpeper	VA	38,828	0.2%	23,419	0.1%	62,247	0.3%
Danville	IL	95,267	0.4%	56,951	0.2%	152,218	0.6%
Dayton	OH	301,833	1.3%	207,492	0.9%	509,325	2.1%
Eagle Point	OR	47,659	0.2%	42,781	0.2%	90,440	0.4%
Florence	SC	51,762	0.2%	48,350	0.2%	100,112	0.4%
Florida	FL	597,009	2.5%	151,573	0.6%	748,582	3.1%
Ft. Bayard	NM	19,744	0.1%	30,005	0.1%	49,749	0.2%
Ft. Bliss	TX	69,079	0.3%	8,249	0.0%	77,328	0.3%
Ft. Custer	MI	214,654	0.9%	559,276	2.3%	773,930	3.2%
Ft. Gibson	OK	124,928	0.5%	50,871	0.2%	175,799	0.7%
Ft. Logan	CO	299,882	1.3%	24,118	0.1%	324,000	1.4%
Ft. Lyon	CO	5,349	0.0%	23,481	0.1%	28,830	0.1%
Ft. McPherson	NE	4,168	0.0%	14,887	0.1%	19,055	0.1%
Ft. Mitchell	AL	63,438	0.3%	449,089	1.9%	512,527	2.1%
Ft. Richardson	AK	58,499	0.2%	22,150	0.1%	80,649	0.3%
Ft. Sam Houston	TX	158,476	0.7%	125,954	0.5%	284,430	1.2%
Ft. Scott	KS	16,460	0.1%	18,739	0.1%	35,199	0.1%
Ft. Snelling	MN	278,583	1.2%	125,606	0.5%	404,189	1.7%
Houston	TX	447,791	1.9%	51,595	0.2%	499,386	2.1%
Indiantown Gap	PA	411,006	1.7%	622,560	2.6%	1,033,566	4.3%
Jefferson Barracks	MO	263,708	1.1%	41,687	0.2%	305,395	1.3%
Keokuk	IA	23,998	0.1%	43,593	0.2%	67,591	0.3%
Leavenworth	KS	233,611	1.0%	32,552	0.1%	266,163	1.1%
Lebanon	KY	90,384	0.4%	15,237	0.1%	105,621	0.4%
Marion	IN	233,623	1.0%	47,008	0.2%	280,631	1.2%
Massachusetts	MA	265,073	1.1%	467,423	2.0%	732,496	3.1%
Mound City	IL	24,059	0.1%	7,716	0.0%	31,775	0.1%
Mountain Home	TN	151,629	0.6%	55,417	0.2%	207,046	0.9%
New Albany	IN	51,639	0.2%	63,573	0.3%	115,212	0.5%
Puerto Rico	PR	120,435	0.5%	0	0.0%	120,435	0.5%
Quantico	VA	501,199	2.1%	297,010	1.2%	798,209	3.3%
Quincy	IL	24,136	0.1%	21,501	0.1%	45,637	0.2%
Riverside	CA	393,357	1.6%	1,004,400	4.2%	1,397,757	5.8%
Salisbury	NC	268,065	1.1%	115,593	0.5%	383,658	1.6%
Sitka	AK	7,210	0.0%	722	0.0%	7,932	0.0%
Springfield	MO	67,987	0.3%	25,932	0.1%	93,919	0.4%
West Virginia	WV	37,516	0.2%	81,317	0.3%	118,833	0.5%
Willamette	OR	206,752	0.9%	132,018	0.6%	338,770	1.4%
TOTALS		7,798,693	32.6%	6,599,084	27.6%	14,397,777	60.1%

OPERATING STATE VETERAN CEMETERIES - 2000

STATE VETERAN CEMETERY	STATE	VETERAN POPULATIONS BY SERVICE AREA (YEAR 2000) PSA	% OF TOT-VET	SSA	% OF TOT-VET	TOTAL	% OF TOT-VET
OPEN							
Arizona Veterans Memorial	AZ	267,667	1.1%	117,002	0.5%	384,669	1.6%
Middletown Veterans	CT	400,603	1.7%	0	0.0%	400,603	1.7%
Delaware Veterans	DE	69,948	0.3%	0	0.0%	69,948	0.3%
Hawaii Veterans 1/	HI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kauai Veterans 1/	HI	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HI-STATE TOTAL		13,702	0.1%	78,086	0.3%	91,788	0.4%
Sunset (Quincy)	IL	23,377	0.1%	21,501	0.1%	44,878	0.2%
Cheltenham Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Crownsville Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eastern Shore Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Garrison Forest Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rocky Gap Veterans	MD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
MD-STATE-TOTAL		453,766	1.9%	0	0.0%	453,766	1.9%
Maine Veterans Memorial	ME	111,859	0.5%	25,539	0.1%	137,398	0.6%
Ft. Harrison Veterans	MT	28,651	0.1%	27,168	0.1%	55,819	0.2%
NJ Vet. Memorial(Arneytown)	NJ	429,072	1.8%	290,059	1.2%	719,131	3.0%
Rhode Island Veterans	RI	97,672	0.4%	0	0.0%	97,672	0.4%
Wisconsin Veterans Memorial	WI	100,372	0.4%	173,362	0.7%	273,734	1.1%
Oregon Trail State Veterans	WY	22,058	0.1%	24,128	0.1%	46,186	0.2%
Guam Veterans	GUAM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTALS		2,018,747	8.4%	756,845	3.2%	2,775,592	11.6%

1/ Grant is in process

COUNTIES INCLUDED IN NATIONAL AND/OR STATE CEMETERY SERVICE AREAS
IN 2000
COUNTY INCLUDED IN
NATIONAL SERVICE AREA
STATE CEMETERY AREA
BOTH
NOT INCLUDED
OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND STATISTICS
70

OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES 2020

ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATIONS BY SERVICE AREAS (YEAR 2020)

CEMETERY	STATE	PSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	SSA	% OF TOT VETERANS	TOTAL	% OF TOT VETERANS
Bath	NY	104,432	0.6%	172,613	1.0%	277045	1.6%
Black Hills	SD	13,109	0.1%	4,775	0.0%	17884	0.1%
Calverton	NY	561,774	3.3%	556,836	3.3%	1118610	6.6%
Camp Butler	IL	45,422	0.3%	76,014	0.4%	121436	0.7%
Corinth	MS	37,572	0.2%	41,402	0.2%	78974	0.5%
Culpeper	VA	26,536	0.2%	16,156	0.1%	42692	0.3%
Danville	IL	68,354	0.4%	45,256	0.3%	113610	0.7%
Eagle Point	OR	32,846	0.2%	33,411	0.2%	66257	0.4%
Florida	FL	410,578	2.4%	110,115	0.7%	520693	3.1%
Ft. Bayard	NM	13,460	0.1%	22,202	0.1%	35662	0.2%
Ft. Bliss	TX	54,619	0.3%	6,245	0.0%	60864	0.4%
Ft. Custer	MI	171,208	1.0%	417,020	2.5%	588228	3.5%
Ft. Logan	CO	217,311	1.3%	16,678	0.1%	233989	1.4%
Ft. Lyon	CO	3,741	0.0%	15,441	0.1%	19182	0.1%
Ft. McPherson	NE	2,665	0.0%	9,713	0.1%	12378	0.1%
Ft. Mitchell	AL	49,114	0.3%	352,299	2.1%	401413	2.4%
Ft. Richardson	AK	45,904	0.3%	15,717	0.1%	61621	0.4%
Ft. Snelling	MN	194,905	1.2%	89,166	0.5%	284071	1.7%
Houston	TX	330,807	2.0%	39,420	0.2%	370227	2.2%
Indiantown Gap	PA	279,062	1.6%	422,900	2.5%	701962	4.1%
Jefferson Barracks	MO	187,543	1.1%	32,446	0.2%	219989	1.3%
Keokuk	IA	24,341	0.1%	32,992	0.2%	57333	0.3%
Leavenworth	KS	165,446	1.0%	27,288	0.2%	192734	1.1%
Lebanon	KY	67,192	0.4%	13,809	0.1%	81001	0.5%
Marion	IN	175,613	1.0%	54,969	0.3%	230582	1.4%
Massachusetts	MA	176,493	1.0%	314,724	1.9%	491217	2.9%
Mountain Home	TN	112,727	0.7%	55,294	0.3%	168021	1.0%
Puerto Rico	PR	102,909	0.6%	0	0.0%	102909	0.6%
Quantico	VA	371,460	2.2%	206,941	1.2%	578401	3.4%
Riverside	CA	264,389	1.6%	647,028	3.8%	911417	5.4%
Sitka	AK	4,207	0.0%	367	0.0%	4574	0.0%
West Virginia	WV	26,999	0.2%	57,135	0.3%	84134	0.5%
TOTALS:		4,342,738	25.7%	3,906,372	23.1%	8,249,110	48.8%

COUNTIES INCLUDED IN NATIONAL AND/OR STATE CEMETERY SERVICE AREAS
IN 2020
COUNTY INCLUDED IN
NATIONAL SERVICE AREA
STATE CEMETERY AREA
BOTH
NOT INCLUDED
OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND STATISTICS
72

The map on page 72 depicts the geographic coverage of the system in 2020. It is obvious that an even greater portion of the United States will not be reasonably served by open national cemeteries or State veteran cemeteries.

To summarize, at present about 19,235,300 living veterans or 69.2% of the 27,777,000 total veterans reside within about 100 miles of the 65 open national cemeteries and the three new national cemeteries now under construction. In the year 2000, the veteran population will have decreased to about 23,951,000 and the number of open national cemeteries will have decreased to 47 through closure of 21 national cemeteries. At that time about 14,397,800 or 60.1% of all veterans will reside within about 100 miles from a national cemetery. By the year 2020, the veteran population will have further decreased to about 16,917,000 and open national cemeteries to 32. About 8,249,000 veterans or 48.8% of all veterans will reside within about 100 miles of an open national cemetery. Under present conditions in the National Cemetery System, there will be a decline of 20% in veterans reasonably served from almost 70% at present to about 49% in 2020.

In general, the effectiveness of gravesite distribution in relation to population will be significantly reduced through the planning period due to national cemetery closures. This significant reduction in effectiveness will occur during the period of time when veterans' needs are greatest due to increased veteran and dependent deaths.

CHAPTER 6

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS WITH NEED FOR VETERAN BURIAL SPACE

The preceding report section addressed the effectiveness of the National Cemetery System and the State veteran cemetery network in terms of making grave space available to the veteran population. Maps on pages 64, 70 and 72 depict geographic areas in the United States where veterans will be reasonably served as a result of their place of residence in relation to an open cemetery facility. This report section addresses the approximately 10.2 million veterans who will not be reasonably served under the stated definition of "reasonably served".

In response to specfic requirements of PL 99-576, Sec. 41 (b)(2), ten geographic areas in the United States are identified in order of priority where a significant number of veterans reside within about a 100-mile radius of an identified focal point and where the majority of these veterans are not reasonably served by an existing open national or State veterans cemetery. Although areas are identified, this report does not establish or suggest policy for constructing new national cemeteries at any or all of the sites. Identification is made on the basis of conditions that will exist in 1990. This year is selected since it is only 3 years hence and establishes decade segments through the report period (1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020) to provide correlation for comparative analyses of trends.

Although the areas are identified on the basis of conditions in 1990, priorities would be affected by changes that could occur throughout the planning period such as:

- Closings of presently open national cemeteries.
- Establishment of State veterans cemeteries in priority areas.
- Actual future conditions which deviate significantly from presently projected demographic information.

Counties containing veteran populations of 5000 or more were included in this analysis. Further identification was made of unserved counties where annual veteran deaths will exceed 100. A definite correlation between populations and deaths was evident.

Counties which meet these criteria were then sorted and ranked in order of magnitude. Those having significant veteran populations were depicted on a map to identify groups of counties within about a 100-mile radius from a demographically optimum focal point which met criteria and which were contiguous. This provided indications of localized geographic areas with significant veteran population concentrations which were not fully served by an open cemetery facility. Areas were then ranked in order of magnitude on the basis of gross veteran populations residing within the service areas of the identified locations.

In some instances, open national cemeteries exist in the general area of identified locations and service areas overlap. However, each location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries will influence activities at the identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report and which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy.

Geographic areas identified in the manner described coincide with Metropolitan Statistical Areas. This indicates that veteran population concentrations generally correspond with those in the general population. Further, as expected, the concentrations are associated with major metropolitan areas and are therefore identified as such.

Using the above methodology, the ten geographic areas in the United States in which need for burial space for veterans is greatest, listed in order of total veterans served, are:

1. Chicago, Illinois
2. Northern California (San Francisco Area)
3. Miami/Fort Lauderdale, Florida
4. Cleveland/Akron/Canton, Ohio
5. Detroit, Michigan
6. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
7. Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
8. Seattle/Tacoma, Washington
9. Albany/Utica, New York
10. Oklahoma City/Lawton, Oklahoma

This listing deviates somewhat from the locations cited in an internal study. The earlier information did not consider the State veterans cemetery network's contribution towards meeting veterans' burial needs. Locations identified in the internal study which do not appear in the current listing are addressed as follows:

Phoenix/Tucson, Arizona - This geographic area is served by the Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery which is located at Phoenix. This is a State owned and operated veterans cemetery which was established with assistance from Federal funds through the State Cemetery Grants Program.

Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama - These two areas were designated in earlier information since, at that time, land had not yet been acquired for establishment of a regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region IV. Land has since been acquired for this cemetery at Phenix City, Alabama and construction is in progress for establishing Fort Mitchell National Cemetery. Atlanta, Georgia falls at the outer limits of the service area of this cemetery. Birmingham, Alabama lies only a few miles outside of the service area of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery. Due to its proximity to the cemetery and socio-economic congruity derived from being in the same State, it is anticipated that Birmingham will be reasonably served by Fort Mitchell National Cemetery.

Each of the ten areas designated in the current list is assessed for potential contribution to improving gravesite distribution in relation to unserved veterans in 1990. At that time, the National Cemetery System will have 60 open national cemeteries and the State veteran cemetery network will have 15 operating cemeteries. Approximately 16.7 million veterans, or about 62.1% of the 26.9 million veterans living at that time, will reside within about 100 miles of an open national cemetery. About 10.2 million veterans (37.9%) will not have reasonable access to an open national cemetery. Demographic information is reported in tabular format for uniformity and easy reference.

Chicago, Illinois - This location includes the heavily populated area of Northeastern Illinois, Northwestern Indiana and Southeastern Wisconsin. The map on the following page depicts the service area of this location. Twenty (20) counties have veteran populations in excess of 10,000, and 3 in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Chicago-Gary-Lake County as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Rockford, Kankakee, Bloomington-Normal, Peoria, Lafayette and South Bend-Mishawaka, are within or partially within the service area of this location.

Wood National Cemetery (closure in 1997), Danville National Cemetery (closure in 2030), Marion National Cemetery (closure in 2030), Rock Island National Cemetery (closure in 1994), and Fort Custer National Cemetery (closure in 2030) are in the general area of this location and their service areas overlap with those for the Chicago location. However, due to the large concentration of veterans at Chicago, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Chicago area:

Following Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA) ---------779,826
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)---------295,473

Total -------1,075,299

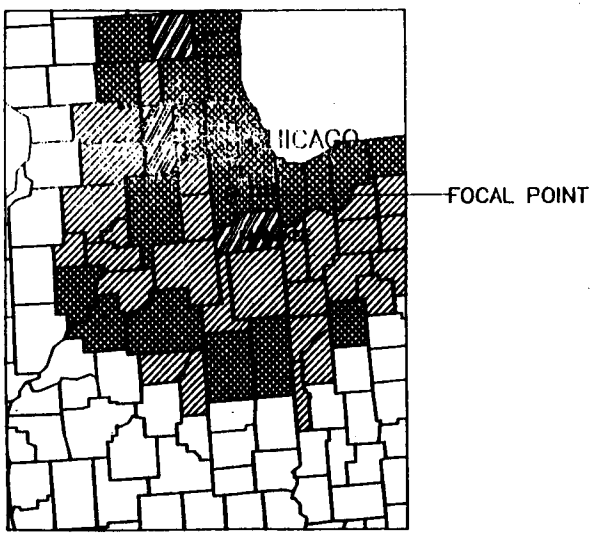
Illinois Veterans Percent of Illinois' Veteran Population--- 72.1%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population----------4.0%

Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses)
in the PSA and SSA ----------1,914,032

Estimated Veterans Deaths in the PSA and SSA in: 1990--------19,036
2000--------21,951
2010--------22,290
2020--------19,443

Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period---------658,850

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--CHICAGO IN 1990



Northern California (San Francisco Area) - Environmental studies and preparation of a Master Plan are underway as preliminary planning for establishing a national cemetery in this area. Costs incurred for these activities are from Advanced Planning Funds. The President's Fiscal Year 1988 budget requests funds for construction of this national cemetery. Of the sites considered, the preferred site is located near Los Banos in Merced County where efforts are being made to effect the donation of land.

The map on the following page depicts this location. The service area comprises 27 counties of which 18 have a veteran population in excess of 10,000. Two (2) counties have veteran populations in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of San Francisco Oakland-San Jose, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Sacramento, Stockton, Salinas-Seaside-Monterey, Fresno and Visalia Tulare-Porterville, are within or partially within the service area of this location.

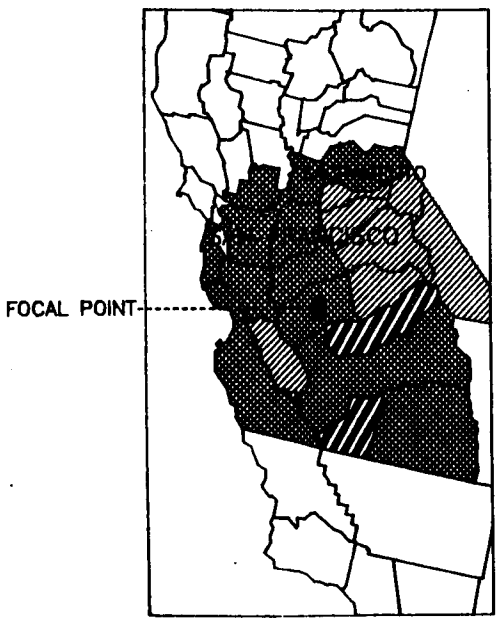
Service areas of presently open national cemeteries do not overlap those for this location.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Northern California area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA) - - - -	487,064
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA) - - - -	499,768
Total - - - -	986,832
Percent of California's Veteran Population - - - - - - - - - -	35.8%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population - - - - - - - - - -	3.7%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA -	1,756,561
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in: 1990 - -	17,865
2000 - -	21,811
2010 - -	22,900
2020 - -	19,902
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period - - - -	660,589

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--SAN FRANCISCO

IN 1990



VETERAN POPULATION

1 to 5000
5000 to 10000
10000 to 160000

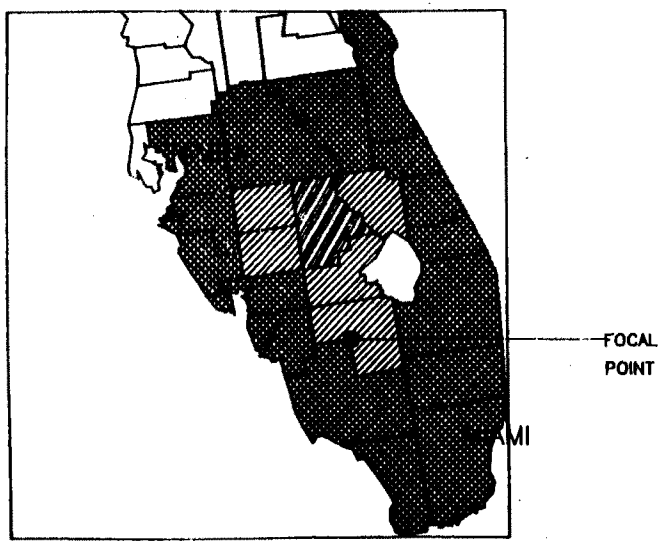
Miami/Fort Lauderdale, Florida - This area includes all of Southern Florida and is depicted on the map on the following page. Twenty-two (22) counties are within the service area of this location of which 16 have veteran populations in excess of 10,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Miami - Fort Lauderdale as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Naples, Fort Myers - Cape Coral, Fort Pierce, West Palm Beach - Boca Raton - Delray Beach, Bradenton, Lakeland - Winter Haven and Tampa are within or partially within the service area of this location.

Florida National Cemetery which is under construction and Bay Pines National Cemetery which is projected to close in 1987, are in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. However, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report, but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	491,357
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	335,227
Total	826,584
Percent of Florida's Veteran Population	54.7%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	3.1%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	1,471,320
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990	18,522
2000	24,799
2010	25,886
2020	20,734
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period	731,976

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--MIAMI/FT. LAUDERDALE IN 1990



VETERAN POPULATION

1 to 5000
5000 to 10000
10000 to 160000

Cleveland/Akron/Canton, Ohio - This area includes all counties in Northeastern and central Ohio, and is depicted on the map on the following page. Fifty-seven (57) of the 88 counties in Ohio are within the service area of this location. Twenty (20) have veteran populations in excess of 10,000 and 15 in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Cleveland-Akron-Lorain, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Youngstown-Warren, Canton, Lima, Steubenville, Columbus, Toledo and Mansfield, are within or partially within the service areas of this location.

Dayton National Cemetery which is projected to close in 2006, and the new West Virginia National Cemetery which will be open beyond 2030, are in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. However, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open facilities could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report, but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Cleveland/Akron/Canton area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)---------440,463
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)-------348,660
Total -------789,123

Ohio Veterans Percent of Ohio's Veteran Population ----------63.0%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population ----------2.9%

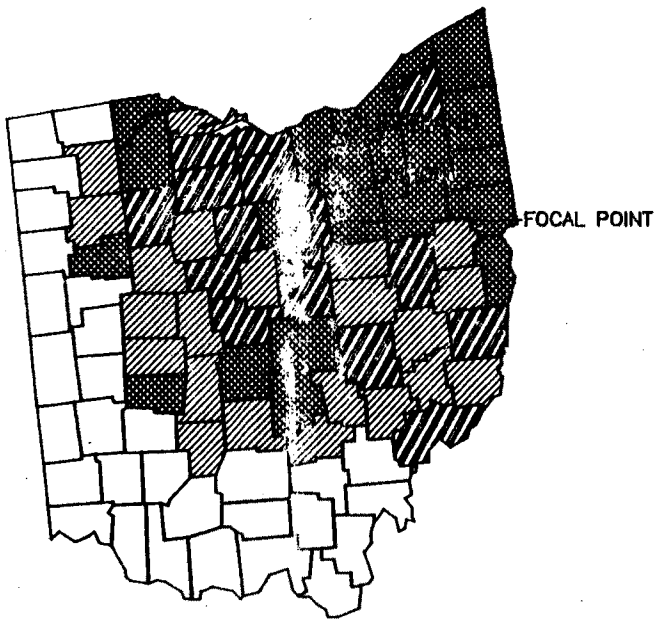
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses)
in the PSA and SSA ----------1,404,639

Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990 ---------13,914
2000 ---------15,795
2010 ---------15,772
2020 ---------13,562

Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period --------470,029

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--CLEVELAND

IN 1990



Detroit, Michigan - This location serves the heavily populated area of Southeastern Michigan and is depicted on the map on the following page. There are 35 counties in the service area of this location of which 14 have veteran populations in excess of 10,000, and 8 in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Detroit - Ann Arbor, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Flint, Saginaw-Bay City-Midland, Jackson, Toledo and Lansing - East Lansing are within or partially within the service area of this location.

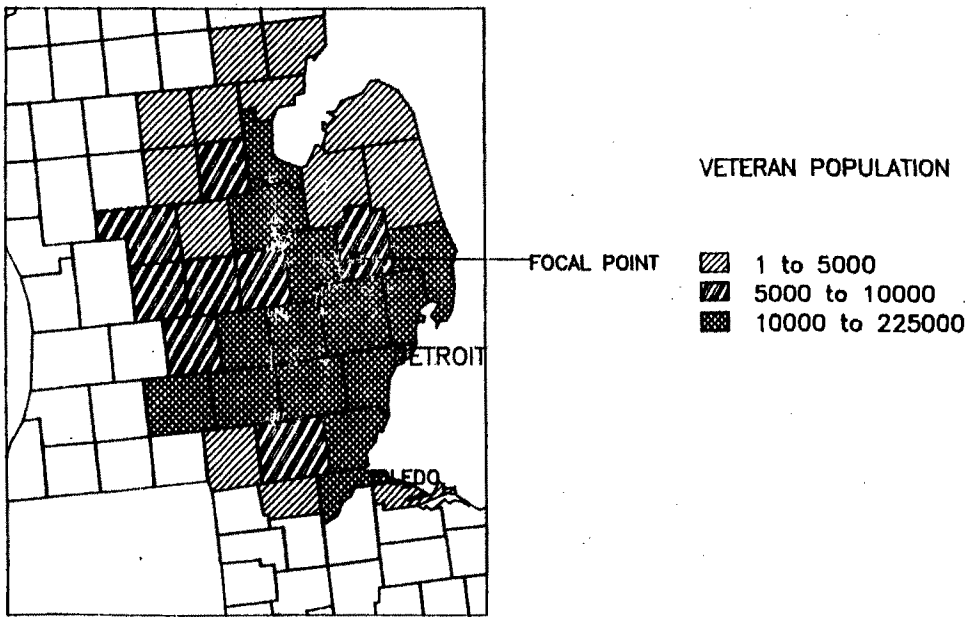
Fort Custer National Cemetery, which will remain open beyond 2030, is in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. However, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Detroit area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	576,164
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	202,170
Total	778,334
Michigan Veterans Percent of Michigan's Veteran Population	73.5%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	2.9%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	1,385,435
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990	12,555
2000	13,927
2010	14,086
2020	12,783
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period	421,902

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--DETROIT

IN 1990



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - The location covers heavily populated Western Pennsylvania and is depicted on the map on the following page. Within the service area, 34 counties are in Pennsylvania, 3 in Maryland, 5 in Ohio and 7 in West Virginia. Of these counties, 22 have veteran populations in excess of 10,000 and 13 in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Pittsburgh - Beaver Valley, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Sharon, Johnstown, Altoona and State College are within or partially within the service area of this location.

Indiantown Gap, Bath and the new West Virginia National Cemeteries, all of which will remain open beyond 2030, are in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. However, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Pittsburgh area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	353,813
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	388,982
Total	742,795

Pennsylvania Veterans Percent of Pennsylvania's Veteran Population	39.2%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	2.8%

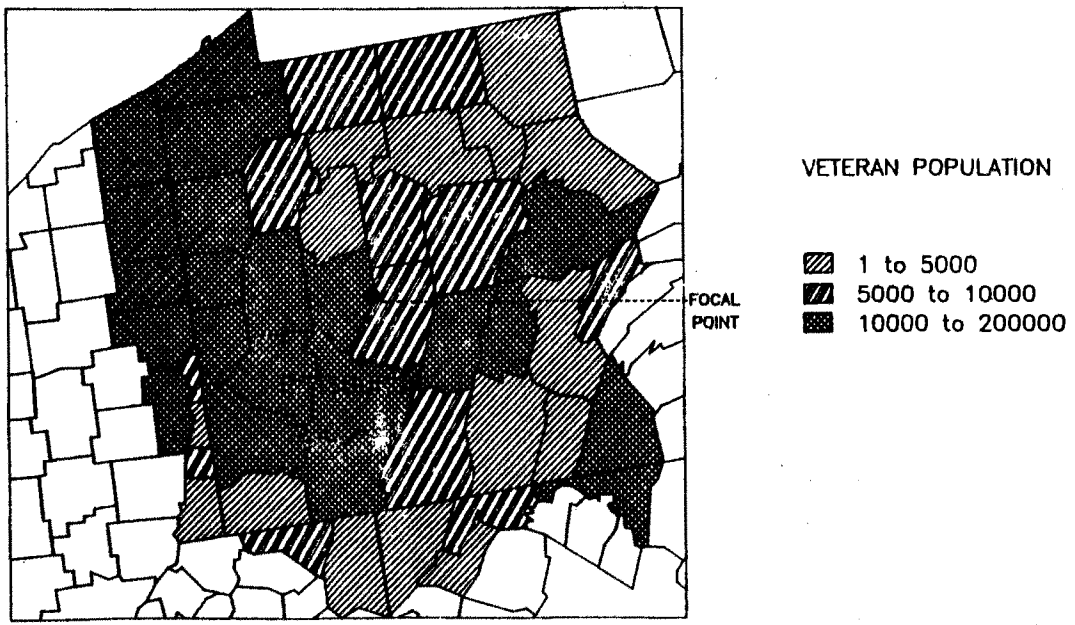
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	1,322,175

Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990	13,911
2000	15,765
2010	15,554
2020	12,807

Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period	464,069

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--PITTSBURGH

IN 1990



Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas - This location includes Texas counties surrounding the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area. Forty-four (44) counties are within the service area of this location which is depicted on the map on the following page. Eight (8) of these counties have veteran populations in excess of 10,000, and 6 in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Dallas-Fort Worth, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Waco, Killeen-Temple and Sherman-Denison are within or partially within the service area of this location.

Service areas of presently open national cemeteries do not overlap those for this location.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Dallas/Fort Worth area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	418,539
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	140,554
Total	559,093

Percent of the Texas' Veteran Population	31.1%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	2.1%

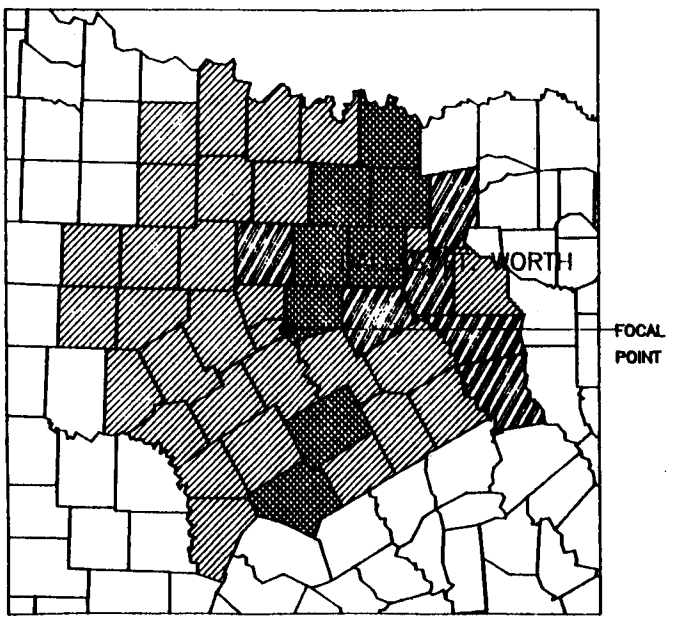
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	995,186

Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in: 1990	9,247
2000	12,392
2010	13,972
2020	13,274

Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period	390,874

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--DALLAS/FT. WORTH

IN 1990



Seattle/Tacoma, Washington - This location includes all of Western Washington and is depicted on the map on the following page. Nine (9) of the 27 counties comprising the service area have veteran populations in excess of 10,000; 9 have veteran populations in excess of 5,000. The Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area of Seattle-Tacoma, as well as Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Bellingham, Olympia and Yakima, are within the service area of this location. The area is not served by an open national cemetery and there are no national cemeteries in the State of Washington.

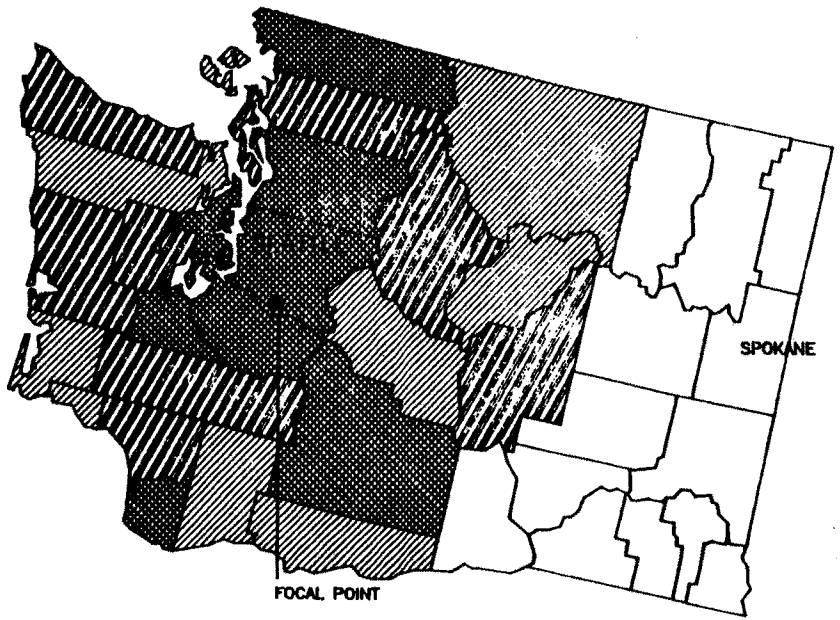
This area is the demographically optimum location for a national cemetery in Standard Federal Region X which includes Idaho, Oregon and Washington. As such, it would be the preferred location for a regional cemetery to replace Willamette National Cemetery at Portland, Oregon which will close about the year 2000.

Willamette National Cemetery is in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. However, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the ecope of this report but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is s summary of veteran demographics related to the Seattle-Tacoma area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	400,133
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	114,949
Total	515,082
Percent of the Washington's Veteran Population	88.9%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	1.9%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	916,846
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990	8,707
2000	11,061
2010	12,102
2020	11,221
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Plannng Period	344,003

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY
FOR SITUATION--SEATTLE
IN 1990



Albany/Utica, New York - This location includes Northeastern New York, most of Vermont and Western New Hampshire. The area is depicted on the map on the following page. Thirty-nine (39) counties comprise the service area of which 9 have veteran populations in excess of 10,000 and 14 in excess of 5,000. Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Utica-Rome, Glens Falls, Albany-Schenectady-Troy and Burlington are within or partially within the service area of this location.

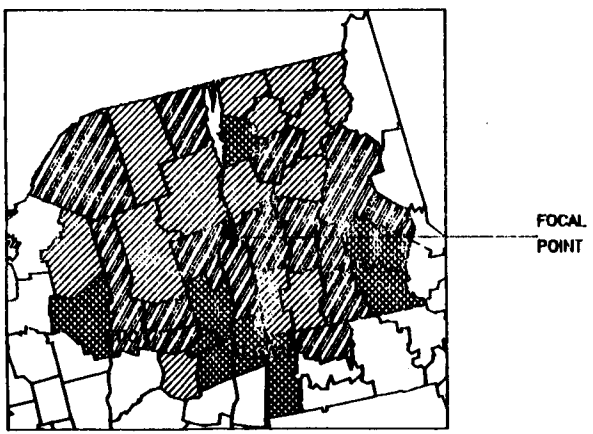
Service areas of presently open national cemeteries do not overlap those for this location.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Albany/Utica area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)		82,541
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)		259,728
	Total	342,269
New York Veterans Percent of New York's Veteran Population		10.0%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population		1.3%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA		609,239
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in:	1990	6,182
	2000	7,249
	2010	7,277
	2020	6,274
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period		215,528

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--ALBANY-UTICA

IN 1990



Oklahoma City/Lawton, Oklahoma - This location comprises 38 counties in Oklahoma and 8 in Texas. The area is depicted on the map on the following page. Four (4) counties have veteran populations in excess of 10,000 and 7 in excess of 5,000. Metropolitan Statistical Areas of Oklahoma City, Enid, Lawton and Wichita Falls are within or partially within the service area of this location.

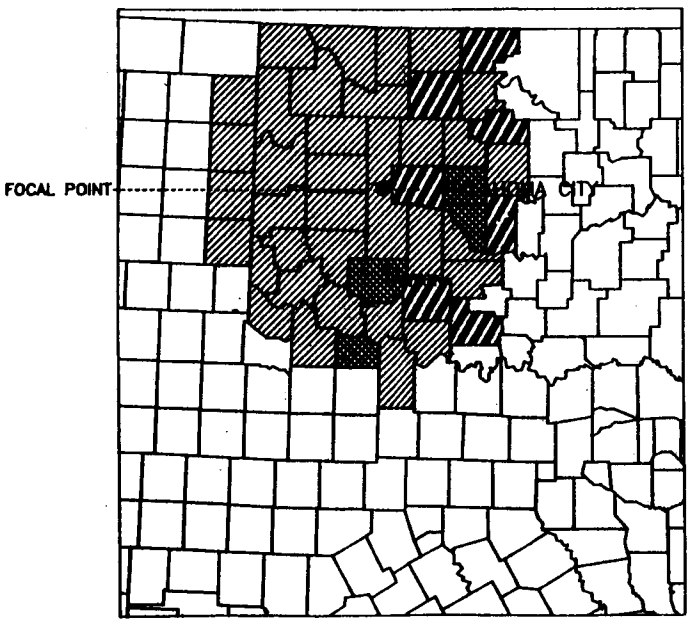
Fort Gibson National Cemetery, which is projected to close in 2014, is in the general area of this location and service areas overlap. however, the location justifies identification exclusive of other open facilities. The degree to which other open cemeteries could influence activities at identified locations is a complex issue which is beyond the scope of this report but which will be considered in the formulation of any future policy for expansion.

Following is a summary of veteran demographics related to the Oklahoma/Lawton area:

Veterans Residing in the Primary Service Area (PSA)	43,645
Veterans Residing in the Secondary Service Area (SSA)	195,456
Total	239,101
Oklahoma Veterans Percent of Oklahoma's Veteran Population	55.0%
Percent of the Total Veteran Population	0.9%
Estimated Potential Users (veterans and spouses) in the PSA and SSA	425,600
Estimated Veteran Deaths in the PSA and SSA in 1990	4,148
2000	5,308
2010	5,755
2020	5,405
Cumulative Veteran Deaths through the Planning Period	164,543

VETERAN POPULATION BY COUNTY FOR SITUATION--OKLAHOMA CITY

IN 1990



VETERAN POPULATION

1 to 5000
5000 to 10000
10000 to 100000

The chart on the following page provides an overview of populations and veteran deaths related to the gross area of each of the ten locations and indicators of their relationships to State and national populations and deaths. It is recognized that some veterans in these areas would also be served by other open national cemeteries. Collectively in 1990, the estimated 6.8 million veterans residing within about 100 miles of the ten locations represent 25.5% of the total veteran population at that time. This portion of all veterans will remain high throughout the planning period at 25.0%, 24.7% and 24.4% in 2000, 2010 and 2020 respectively.

A similar conclusion can be reached regarding veteran deaths. The estimated 124,000 veteran deaths that will occur within the gross service areas of the ten locations in 1990 is 26.2% of all veterans deaths that are expected to occur that year. In 2000, 2010 and 2020, the percentage will be about 25.8%, 25.5% and 25.0% respectively.

Except for Northern California, present policy does not include expansion of the National Cemetery System by constructing new national cemeteries at any of the identified locations. However, to fully evaluate the scope of veterans residing in near proximity to the locations, it is necessary to consider their cumulative potential contributions to expanding service to the veteran population as a whole. Based on the best information available at this time, veterans residing in close proximity to the ten identified locations in 1990, in conjunction with those residing within the service areas of existing national cemeteries that will be open at that time, would account for about 21.9 million veterans or about 81.6% of all veterans living at that time.

Ten Geographic Areas of Need

Statistical Summary

	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	STATE	ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATIONS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SERVICE AREAS 1990	2000	2010	2020	PRIMARY STATE'S SERVICE AREAS VETERAN POPULATION PERCENT OF ESTIMATED STATE VETERAN POPULATION 1990	2000	2010	2020	SERVICE AREAS VETERAN POPULATION PERCENT OF EST. U.S. VETERAN POPULATION 1990	2000	2010	2020
1	CHICAGO	IL	1,075,299	901,879	763,557	611,500	72.1%	72.5%	72.5%	72.2%	6.0%	5.8%	5.7%	5.8%
2	SAN FRANCISCO	CA	986,832	838,884	677,512	531,076	35.8%	35.4%	35.1%	34.8%	5.7%	5.5%	5.3%	5.1%
3	MIAMI-FT. LAUDERDALE	FL	828,586	794,816	668,908	535,586	54.7%	54.3%	54.0%	53.2%	5.1%	5.3%	5.3%	5.2%
4	CLEVELAND-AKRON-CANTON	OH	709,123	665,545	559,931	476,283	63.0%	61.9%	61.1%	60.7%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
5	DETROIT	MI	778,334	655,730	559,166	484,744	73.5%	72.6%	71.7%	71.0%	2.9%	2.7%	2.8%	2.9%
6	PITTSBURGH	PA	742,795	614,551	501,170	411,400	39.2%	38.1%	37.7%	37.6%	2.8%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%
7	DALLAS-FT. WORTH	TX	559,893	534,800	465,862	383,363	31.1%	31.3%	31.0%	30.6%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%
8	SEATTLE-TACOMA	WA	515,002	463,874	394,546	322,999	88.9%	89.3%	89.3%	89.3%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%
9	ALBANY-UTICA	NY	342,269	308,842	256,484	220,719	10.0%	9.9%	9.9%	10.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%
10	OKLAHOMA CITY-LAWTON	OK	239,101	220,575	187,259	151,960	55.0%	56.2%	56.9%	57.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
	TOTALS:		6,854,512	5,988,104	5,011,595	4,130,446	65.4%	65.1%	64.9%	64.7%	25.5%	25.0%	24.7%	24.4%

	GEOGRAPHIC AREA	STATE	ESTIMATED VETERAN DEATHS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SERVICE AREAS 1990	2000	2010	2020	PRIMARY STATE'S SERVICE AREAS VETERAN DEATHS PERCENT OF ESTIMATED STATE VETERAN DEATHS 1990	2000	2010	2020	SERVICE AREAS VETERAN DEATHS PERCENT OF EST. U.S. VETERAN DEATHS 1990	2000	2010	2020
1	CHICAGO	IL	19,836	21,951	22,298	19,443	49.6%	42.5%	41.4%	43.7%	4.8%	3.8%	3.7%	3.6%
2	SAN FRANCISCO	CA	17,865	21,811	22,900	19,902	36.3%	36.3%	36.2%	35.9%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.7%
3	MIAMI-FT. LAUDERDALE	FL	10,522	24,799	25,886	20,734	66.2%	74.7%	77.7%	74.3%	3.9%	4.3%	4.2%	3.8%
4	CLEVELAND-AKRON-CANTON	OH	13,914	15,795	15,772	13,562	64.2%	62.9%	61.7%	60.4%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%
5	DETROIT	MI	12,555	13,927	14,086	12,781	51.2%	51.4%	52.0%	55.0%	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.4%
6	PITTSBURGH	PA	13,911	15,765	15,554	12,807	30.1%	33.2%	29.5%	25.1%	2.9%	2.7%	2.5%	2.4%
7	DALLAS-FT. WORTH	TX	9,267	12,192	13,972	13,276	58.7%	78.4%	77.5%	80.3%	2.0%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%
8	SEATTLE-TACOMA	WA	8,787	11,061	12,102	11,221	93.1%	94.5%	94.3%	92.8%	1.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%
9	ALBANY-UTICA	NY	6,182	7,249	7,277	6,274	9.7%	9.5%	9.2%	9.0%	1.3%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
10	OKLAHOMA CITY-LAWTON	OK	4,148	5,308	5,755	5,405	56.0%	57.4%	57.7%	58.4%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%
	TOTALS:		124,087	150,858	155,594	135,405	45.9%	45.9%	45.9%	45.8%	26.2%	25.8%	25.5%	25.0%

The foregoing identification process and analyses of the ten locations' potential contribution to making gravespace available to the veteran population are predicated on probable conditions in 1990. However, if in outlying years certain conditions change, prioritized locations could be affected. This is especially true if some presently open national cemeteries were to close. For example, if Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, which serves the significant segment of veterans residing in the San Antonio, Texas area were to close, other priority locations could be affected. Also, if a State veterans cemetery was to be established at any of the identified areas, the need for a national cemetery in that area could be displaced.

Because of these and other variables, identified priorities cannot be considered static or final. Conditions must be monitored to identify influencing factors that would affect long-range planning for the National Cemetery System. The development of future policy must take into consideration all program developments and initiatives.

Service areas for the ten identified areas overlap those for existing open national cemeteries in some cases; i.e., some counties fall within the service area of the identified location and an open facility. Veterans which would be served only by each location are indicated for milestone years in Appendix I. These net veterans as well as the cumulative percentage representation of all veterans is reported. Appendix II provides a listing of the ten locations rearranged on the basis of net veterans which would be served for conditions in the year 2000.

CHAPTER 7

PLANS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

The increasing number of veteran deaths in future years was reviewed in an earlier section of this report. Under stated planning assumptions, veteran interments in national cemeteries are expected to increase at about the same rate as veteran deaths. Following are estimated annual interments in the National Cemetery System for the planning period through 2020. These projections are based upon non-expansion of the system:

1987 - 54,000	2000 - 81,400
1988 - 55,000	2005 - 82,400
1989 - 56,400	2010 - 86,500
1990 - 57,900	2015 - 67,000
1995 - 67,800	2020 - 34,700

Cumulative interments in national cemeteries throughout the planning period (1987 through 2020) are expected to be about 2.3 million. Interment activities in national cemeteries are expected to increase in spite of closings of some now open national cemeteries (see pages 65 and 66). The peak period of demand on the system from veteran deaths is expected to occur about 2010.

In order to meet increasing demands on the network of national and State veterans cemeteries, planning considerations must be addressed in the following primary areas:

- o Completion of national cemeteries already under construction.
- o Greater participation in the State Veteran Cemetery Grant Program.
- o Progressive land development in existing open national cemeteries.
- o Limited expansion of existing national cemeteries.
- o Policy review for future expansion of the National Cemetery System.

Completion of national cemeteries already under construction. Two new national cemeteries, Florida and West Virginia National Cemeteries, are committed for establishment as a part of the National Cemetery System. Projected completion of the initial phase development for these cemeteries is March 1988 and October 1987 respectively. Both are expected to remain open beyond the year 2030.

Based on today's population data, 369,330 veterans (1.3% of all living veterans) reside within the PSA and SSA of Florida National Cemetery; 146,390 (0.5%) reside within the PSA and SSA of West Virginia National Cemetery; and 542,820 (2.0%) reside within the PSA and SSA of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery. Collectively, these three new cemeteries will provide a measurable contribution to the effective distribution of available gravespace for veterans.

Environmental studies and master planning are also underway for a new national cemetery in Northern California. Based on current population data, 987,000 veterans (3.7% of all living veterans) reside within the PSA and SSA of the present study site in Northern California.

Establishment of a national cemetery near the San Francisco metropolition area will be a most effective contributor to meeting the burial needs of veterans in the future.

Promotion of participation in the State Veteran Cemetery Grant Program. State veterans cemeteries which are established, expanded and/or improved with benefit of Federal grant funds serve to complement the National Cemetery System in meeting the burial needs of veterans and their dependents. Although eligibility criteria are sometimes limiting, they make grave space available to an appreciable number of veterans' families.

Although Federal funds contribute to the development of these facilities, their maintenance and operations are the responsibility of the State. From the standpoint of the Federal Government, this program provides an effective method for providing burial space to veterans in close proximity to their places of residence, at locations that would otherwise not be served by a national cemetery.

Participation in this State grant-in-aid program is voluntary on the part of State Governments and often requires a commitment of substantial State funds. Local budgetary constraints are often a deterrent to participation in the program. Notwithstanding expressed reluctance to participation on the part of some States, information about the program should continue to be widely disseminated to the States as well as other parties and organizations with intereat. Inquiries expressing interest in the establishment of a new national cemetery must be first addressed as to participation in the grant program for establishment of a State veteran cemetery.

Participation in the grant program should be encouraged at every appropriate opportunity in contacts with State officials, service and civic organizations, and interested citizens. Participation by the States will economically and effectively complement the National Cemetery System in making grave space available to the largest segment of the veteran population as a whole without commitment of Federal funds for long-term cemetery operations and maintenance.

Progressive land development in existing open national cemeteries. Of the 65 open national cemeteries, 34 have land which is undeveloped for burial purposes. In most cases, this land is developed in phases to provide about 10 years of burial operations so that long-term costs for grounds maintenance are averted.

The charts on pages 110 and 111 provide an overview of cemeteries and indicate phased development activities. Needs for gravesites at individual cemeteries are closely monitored and programmed into the budget process for land development with adequate lead time to insure continued burial operations. Costs for future phased developments indicated on the chart are magnitude estimates utilizing actual construction costs incurred for similar cemetery development elsewhere. These estimates are of a magnitude range only and are based on 1986 dollar values. Actual development costs may vary since assumptions must be made on the amount and configuration of roadways, grading and building construction without specific design definition.

Using the above criteria, projected costs for developments in open national cemeteries are about $128 million to provide burial space beyond 2020; with major fluctuations in yearly budget requests. These cost indicators are to assure continued operations in already open national cemeteries through development of land already in the inventory. They do not represent expansion of the system. Such expenditures can be considered overhead of simply staying in business. Phase development as described is consistent with present policy and should continue.

Limited expansion of existing national cemeteries. In recent years, a practice of limited expansion of existing national cemeteries has been pursued which has extended the longevity of some open national cemeteries. Land acquisition for expansion has been through donations of small parcels by local governments, servce organizations or military departments. Such donations have been initiated locally through concern for continuing operations of the facility. Examples of such expansion are:

- Lebanon National Cemetery, KY - 1.39 acres were donated in 1984 by the American Legion.
- Fort Richardson National Cemetery, AK - The 39 acre cemetery at Fort Richardson, under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army, was transferred to the Veterans Administration in 1984.
- Florence National Cemetery, SC - 4.6 acres were donated in 1985 by the South Carolina Department of Mental Retardation.

- Salisbury National Cemetery, NC - 2.7 acres were donated in 1985 by the Rowan County Veterans Council.

- Camp Nelson National Cemetery, KY - 10 acres were donated in 1986 by Jessamine County.

- Barrancas National Cemetery, FL - By Public Law 97-167, 15.2 acres of the Pensecola Naval Air Station were transferred to the VA for expansion of the cemetery.

- Wood National Cemetery, WI - 12 acres were transferred in 1986 to DMA from the VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery.

A practice of limited expansion of existing national cemeteries can be highly beneficial to the program since it is a cost effective method of extending the delivery of the benefit to veterans. Land is acquired at virtually no cost to the Government and development costs are minimal since land parcels are small and usually of good quality for cemetery use. Start-up costs, equipment acquisition and personnel overhead are not a factor since the cemeteries are already operational. Generally, limited expansion as described is the most efficient method of extending burial benefits to a specific segment of the veteran population.

As time approaches for the closure of a VA national cemetery, the possibility of limited expansion will be reviewed. When offers of donations of land are not forthcoming, consideration will be given to the purchase of property for the expansion of VA national cemeteries. While the existing legislative

authority (38 U.S.C. 1006) permits land purchases for cemeterial purposes, such purchases will be based only upon due consideration of the following:

- Acquisition of land is in the best interest of the Government and would be cost effective.

- Land is adjacent to the existing national cemetery property and engineering studies have been made to determine if land is suitable for cemeterial purposes.

- Land is available for purchase and a fair market value has been established through the process of an objective appraisal.

- The amount of land to be purchased will not exceed the required amount to meet projected veteran and/or dependent needs through the peak period of demand.

Review Policy for Future Expansion of the National Cemetery System.

Since 1974, expansion of the National Cemetery System has been under the "regional concept" policy which provided for the establishment of one large national cemetery in each of the ten Standard Federal Regions and one in the Washington, D.C. area. In implementing this policy, four large existing cemeteries were designated as regional cemeteries. Sites were identified in five other Standard Federal Regions and the Washington, D.C. area and new national cemeteries were constructed. The regional cemetery for Standard Federal Region IV at Fort Mitchell, Alabama is under construction and expected to open in mid-1987. The opening of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery culminates expansion of the National Cemetery System under the "regional concept."

Further expansion of the system through construction of new national cemeteries would not be in conformance with established policy. This report has identified ten geographic areas within the United States in which the need for burial space for veterans is greatest. The development of a statistical base and the identification of the ten locations is provided in response to specific requirements in PL 99-576. Although areas of need are identified and prioritized on the basis of demographics, this report does not establish or propose a policy change for further expansion of the National Cemetery System through construction of cemeteries at these locations. This report proposes that a policy review be conducted to evaluate the current policy and other options.

In developing new policy, expansion under past policy would be evaluated to assess its effectiveness in accomplishing program objectives. Parameters on the extent to which the veteran community is to be reasonably served needs to be defined.

The current Agency policy will be recertified or changed in order to provide direction for the future scope and scale of the National Cemetery System.

Plans for the future operation of the National Cemetery System as outlined in this section are summarized as follows:

- Completion of national cemeteries already under construction.
- Greater participation in the State Veteran Cemetery Grant Program.
- Limited expansion of existing national cemeteries.
- Progressive land development in existing open national cemeteries.
- Policy review for future expansion of the National Cemetery System.

The above actions, implemented at appropriate times and in concert, are responsive to veterans' identified needs, realistic in concept, attainable, and essential to effectively deliver burial benefits to our nations veterans through the year 2020 including the period when needs are greatest.

CEMETERY	EST. DEPL. OF CURRENT AVAILABLE GRAVESITES IN (FY)	ACREAGE & POTENTIAL GRAVESITES DATA				PROJECT COST DATA				EST. DEPL. OF AVAIL. GRAVESITES IN (FY)
		TOTAL ACRES	DVLPD. ACRES	UNDVLPD. ACRES	POTENTIAL G/S	FUNDED IN (FY)	GRAVESITE YIELD	DOLLAR COST ($ 000)		
BARRANCAS, FL	1989	45.1	29.9	15.2	11,000	1986	11,000	675	(2)a	2006
BATH, NY	1989	25.0	19.0	6.0	5,200	1985	5,200	154	(1)b	2022
BLACK HILLS, SD	2027	105.9	31.6	74.3	70,000					
CALVERTON, NY	1994	902.0	410.0	492.0	500,000	1989	90,000	11,400	(1)a*	2003
CAMP BUTLER, IL	2023	39.2	37.2	2.0	2,000					
CAMP NELSON, KY	1998	19.8	13.6	6.2	3,800					
CHATTANOOGA, TN	2015	120.0	118.0	2.0	2,450	N/A	2,450			2020
EAGLE POINT, OR	2089	41.4	6.0	35.4	38,500					
FLORIDA, FL		400.0	0.0	400.0	100,000	1986	21,380	5,230	(1)a*	2000
FT. BLISS, TX	1996	59.0	48.6	11.2	20,000	1987	20,000	500	(2)a	2025
FT. CUSTER, MI	1998	778.6	127.2	643.2	440,000	1991	50,000	4,100	(3)b	2000
FT. GIBSON, OK	1995	32.3	19.2	13.1	5,600	1991	2,000	180	(3)b	1999
FT. LOGAN, CO	1994	214.0	75.8	138.2	122,000	1991	15,000	2,980	(3)a	2006
FT. LYON, CO	2218	51.9	10.7	41.2	50,000					
FT. MCPHERSON, ME	2001	20.0	14.0	6.0	3,500					
FT. MITCHELL, AL		279.4	0.0	279.4	124,000	1988	10,000	2,545	(1)a	2014
FT. RICHARDSON, AK	2001	39.1	19.0	20.1	9,000	1991	1,300	350	(3)b	2017
FT. SAM HOUSTON, TX	1996	106.8	94.9	11.9	9,800	1992	9,800	2,550	(3)b	2002
FT. SNELLING, MN	1993	433.9	225.5	208.4	208,000	1989	50,000	3,300	(3)b	2006
HOUSTON, TX	1995	419.2	75.2	344.0	260,000	1991	15,000	1,000	(3)b	2006
INDIANTOWN GAP, PA	2000	674.6	37.1	637.5	400,000					
JEFF. BARRACKS, MO	1992	309.2	167.5	141.7	90,000	1990	25,000	3,125	(3)b	2003
KEOKUK, IA	2050	22.7	10.2	12.5	5,300					
LEAVENWORTH, KS	1994	164.9	70.8	94.1	65,000	1986	6,000	1,700	(2)a	2005
LEBANON, KY	2077	5.8	4.5	1.3	1,000					
MARION, IN	1989	38.6	23.8	14.8	14,000	1988	7,000	150	(2)a	2056
MASSACHUSETTS, MA	2000	749.3	66.3	683.0	332,000	1992	17,000	2,125	(1)b	2011
MOUNTAIN HOME, TN	2004	42.0	25.6	16.4	9,400					
PUERTO RICO, PR	2006	108.2	51.4	56.8	50,000					
QUANTICO, VA	2007	726.6	76.8	649.8	123,000					
RIVERSIDE, CA	1990	740.3	139.3	601.0	300,000	1985	37,000	6,000	(2)a	1999
						1991	90,000	13,800	(3)b*	2020
SALISBURY, NC	1992	11.2	8.6	2.6	2,000	1987	2,000	190	(2)b	2008
SITKA, AK	1998	4.3	2.5	1.8	1,300	1985	1,300	374	(1)a	2145
SPRINGFIELD, MO	1990	17.1	13.8	3.3	3,000	1982	1,000	293	(1)b	2005
WEST VIRGINIA, WV		50.0	0.0	50.0	10,000	1984	4,000	2,000	(2)a	2016
WILLAMETTE, OR	1994	199.3	184.3	15.0	12,000	1990	12,000	2,440	(3)b	2001
WOOD, WI	1987	48.9	36.9	12.0	8,000	1995	8,000	750	(2)a	1997

NOTE: See footnotes on the following page

PHASED DEVELOPMENT (10 YEAR OPERATIONS) GRAVESITE REQUIREMENTS

CEMETERY	FIRST PHASE: REQUIRE FUNDING IN (FY)	FIRST PHASE: GRAVESITES REQUIRED	FIRST PHASE: EST. COST MAGNITUDE ($ 000)	FIRST PHASE: EST. DEPL. OF AVAIL. GRAVESITES IN (FY)	SECOND PHASE: REQUIRE FUNDING IN (FY)	SECOND PHASE: GRAVESITES REQUIRED	SECOND PHASE: EST. COST MAGNITUDE ($ 000)	SECOND PHASE: EST. DEPL. OF AVAIL. GRAVESITES IN (FY)
CALVERTON, NY	2000	120,000	15,000 (3)a*	2013	2010	120,000	15,000 (3)b*	2023
CAMP NELSON, KY	1995	3,800	400 (3)b	2020				
EAGLE POINT, OR	2006	2,000	200 (3)b	2020				
FLORIDA, FL	1997	20,000	2,000 (1)a	2010	2007	25,000	2,500 (3)a	2020
FT. GIBSON, OK	1996	3,600	400 (3)b	2014				
FT. LOGAN, CO	2003	15,000	2,000 (3)a	2017	2014	15,000	2,000 (3)b	2027
FT. MCPHERSON, ME	1998	3,500	400 (3)b	2030				
FT. MITCHELL, AL	2011	10,000	1,250 (3)a	2024				
FT. RICHARDSON, AK	2014	2,000	400 (3)b	2048				
FT. SNELLING, MN	2003	50,000	3,300(3)a	2017	2015	50,000	3,300(3)b	2028
HOUSTON, TX	2003	15,000	1,500 (3)a	2016	2013	15,000	1,500 (3)b	2026
INDIANTOWN GAP, PA	2005	8,000	1,000 (3)b	2020				
JEFF. BARRACKS, MO	2000	25,000	2,500 (1)a	2013	2010	25,000	2,500 (3)b	2023
LEAVENWORTH, KS	2000	8,000	1,000 (3)b	2018	2014	8,000	1,000 (3)b	2030
MASSACHUSETTS, MA	2006	18,000	2,000 (3)b	2022				
MOUNTAIN HOME, TN	2000	3,000	300 (3)b	2020				
PUERTO RICO, PR	2003	8,000	1,000 (3)b	2014	2011	8,000	1,000 (3)b	2022
WEST VIRGINIA, WV	2013	1,000	100 (3)b	2026				

(1) Actual contract cost.
(2) Funding available, no contract to date.
(3) Magnitude estimates for future contract.

a Project includes gravesites, roads, buildings, etc.
b Project includes only gravesites and roads.

* Project cost based on the use of pre-placed gravelinors .

CHAPTER 8

DESIRABILITY OF ACQUIRING EXISTING STATE VETERANS CEMETERIES

Cemeteries designated as State veterans cemeteries in this report were established, expanded or improved with aid of Federal funds under the provisions of Public Law 95-476, the Veterans' Housing Benefits Act of 1978. This Act, which establishes the State Cemetery Grants Program, provides for equal sharing of costs between the Federal and State Governments. However, ownership, maintenance and administration of these cemeteries is retained solely by the States.

The objective of the State Cemetery Grants Program is to assist States in providing veterans with burial space in close proximity to their places of residence in areas not served by national cemeteries. In doing so, State veterans cemeteries are to complement the National Cemetery System in meeting veterans' burial needs from a national perspective. Goals are to establish veteran cemeteries with States as a participant in their development and responsible for their operations. The program further allows State Governments to actively participate in the implementation of national policy according to their own priorities.

Although the State veterans cemetery network is attaining the objective of complementing national cemeteries, it is not desirable or advisable for the Federal Government to acquire existing State veterans cemeteries for incorporation into the National Cemetery System.

In the past, expansion of the National Cemetery System through establishment of new cemeteries has been with clearly defined objectives to meet veterans' burial needs from a national perspective. Planning for this expansion identified areas of need and established a logical process for meeting needs which were consistent with the operational and budgetary scope of the system as a whole.

State veteran cemeteries are established through a desire by the State to recognize and honor their veterans by providing burial space within a reasonable distance from their homes. Development of the State veterans cemetery network through voluntary participation by States is without centralized planning to meet the specific overall objective of meeting veterans' needs from a national perspective.

To allow States to voluntarily establish cemeteries at locations of their choice for future incorporation into the National Cemetery System would circumvent the intent of the law establishing the program and would result in random expansion of the Federal system without centralized planning and direction. This method of expansion is not consistent with program objectives nor does it demonstrate effective program management.

Acquisition of State veterans cemeteries would shift costs for future development and operations to the Federal Government which is counter to the objectives of the program. This would transfer a significant financial burden to the Federal Government at a time of fiscal austerity. Such a shift would

be inadvisable even for acquisition of the more effective State veterans cemeteries but especially if it were as a result of acquisition of closed facilities which would contribute insignificantly to the overall effectiveness of the National Cemetery System.

Selective acquisition of State veterans cemeteries would establish a precedent which would place the Federal Government in an adversarial position with States when justifying denials of acquisition. Also, selective acquisition could cause controversy among States.

The National Cemetery System and the State veterans cemetery network are autonomous in their origins, authority, objectives and operations even though they may share a common goal of making burial space available to veterans. This autonomy should be retained.

CHAPTER 9

PLANS FOR MEETING VETERANS' FUTURE BURIAL NEEDS

Projected increases in demand for burial in national cemeteries, coupled with progressive closures of now open national cemeteries, make it extremely important to develop long range plans for meeting veterans' future burial needs. A five-point plan is proposed as follows:

1. Encourage Expanded Participation in the State Cemetery Grants Program - The State Cemetery Grants program represents a valuable in-place product with funds available to support the objective of meeting veterans' future burial needs. Further participation by States should be encouraged. Administrators should continue and, where appropriate, expand ongoing efforts to make the program known through wide dissemination of information to State legislators, veterans' service officers, service and civic organizations, and other interested groups and private individuals.

Administrators should reevaluate present policies, regulations and provisions of law to assure that the program complements the National Cemetery System as effectively as possible. Consideration should be given to program improvements which would make participation more appealing to the States. This might include allowing grant assistance for operations and maintenance, initial equipment acquisition, and technical support.

2. Phased Development of Presently Undeveloped Land in Open National Cemeteries

This measure is a continuation of present policy and does not represent expansion of the system. Phased development of raw land to provide about 10 years of operations has proven to be sound cemetery management since it allows for planning based on immediate and accurately projected short-range needs while avoiding costs for long-term maintenance of unneeded developed land. It further allows for phased development of cemetery amenities planned and provided on the basis of known needs.

Anticipated future developments and estimated costs are provided on pages 110 and 111. Continuation of this policy will allow presently open national cemeteries to remain open and effective in meeting veterans' burial needs. Costs for developments are considered operating overhead and do not represent expansion of the National Cemetery System since the undeveloped land is already in inventory.

3. Expansion of the Garden Niche Concept - This is a continuation and extension of present practice in the National Cemetery System. Garden niches have proven to be an effective method for accommodating cremated remains and the concept has met with public acceptance. The concept, which utilizes otherwise unusable land, provides an efficient alternative to using full-sized gravesites to accommodate cremated remains. Conservation of full-sized gravesites extends the longevity of open national cemeteries and therefore service to veterans. In addition to effecting an extension of service in open cemeteries, implementation of the program in closed national cemeteries has allowed reinstated delivery of burial benefits through interments of cremated remains.

Flat grave markers are placed on the garden niches to allow use of land that could not otherwise accommodate casketed remains. Legislative action is recommended to permit the use of flat grave markers in national cemeteries for this purpose.

The practice of cremation has been increasing significantly, and this trend is expected to continue. All national cemeteries will be analyzed and as practicable will be provided with garden niches to meet needs for burial of cremated remains. Where residual land is not available or sufficient to meet needs, specially designed cremain burial sections may be provided.

Extension of the garden niche concept does not constitute expansion of the system and implementation costs are minimal since they relate to layout design only. This measure is an innovative and efficient approach to serving veterans' needs through early recognition of trends in burial customs.

4. Limited Expansion of Existing National Cemeteries - Projected closures of open national cemeteries are established on the basis of expected gravesite usage. Estimated cemetery closures are provided on pages 65 and 66. Generally, cemeteries where grave space has been depleted have simply closed to new interments and have remained closed unless local interest generated the donation of adjacent land for expansion. Then, land was accepted and developed for extending open operations.

Future decisions will be based to a larger degree on the facility's contribution to meeting veterans' burial needs from a national perspective.

Through analyses, cemeteries which make insignificant or minimal contribution to program objectives will be allowed to close and remain closed. On the other hand, every effort will be made to continue open operations at those cemeteries where interment and participation rates are high, and where demographic analysis indicates continued effective contribution to objectives.

Maximum efficiency in use of existing land is assured prior to closing a national cemetery. Therefore, continuing open operations can be attained only by expansion of the facility through acquisition and development of adjacent land if it is available. Where adjacent undeveloped land is not available or is fully developed for other purposes; i.e., residential, commercial or industrial use, the cemetery is a land-locked entity and expansion is not feasible. In such cases it will be necessary to allow the cemetery to close in spite of its history of effectiveness. Where adjacent land may be available, attempts should be made towards acquisition. Although any reasonably sized parcel will serve to extend longevity of the cemetery, land must be esthetically compatible with the existing cemetery, of sufficient size to justify development costs, and not so excessive in size as to provide burial space beyond the planning period.
If available adjacent land is Federally owned, action will be initiated for acquisition through the excess process. If the land is not Federally owned, i.e., State, corporate or privately owned, active solicitation for donation will be initiated. If donation is not forthcoming, consideration should be given to outright purchase of the parcel at a fair market value.

Limited and selective expansion of existing national cemeteries as described is more efficient than establishing new facilities since it eliminates start-up costs, new equipment purchases, expanded staffing, etc. It is a most effective method for accomplishing program objectives so long as:

- Suitable adjacent land is available through the excess process, donation or, when justified, outright purchase under the authority granted the Administrator of Veterans Affairs under 38 U.S.C. 1006.

- Expansion is based on cost/benefit and demographic studies which generate sound and supportable decision documentation.

- Continued operation of the national cemetery through expansion will effectively, efficiently contribute to meeting veterans' burial needs from a national perspective.

5. Establish Policy Related to the Future Physical Development of the National Cemetery System - Expansion of the National Cemetery System under present policy, the regional concept, culminated with the establishment of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery to serve Standard Federal Region IV.

Establishment of new policy to address the issue of expansion/non-expansion will be predicated on a full analysis of the effectiveness of the present system and programs, and a definition of the extent to which the veteran community is to be reasonably served.

The policy must be responsive to the needs to veterans in recognition of the aging veteran population and increasing veteran deaths. Any physical expansion of the sytem must be predicated on the equitable distribution of gravesite resources targeted to areas of greatest need.

The five-point plan outlined here is directed to serving the largest segment of the veteran population in the effective way and, to the extent possible, with States' participation.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

The National Cemetery System is effectively serving veterans in areas where national cemeteries are in open operations. Almost 70% of today's living veterans reside within about 100 miles of an open national cemetery. However, this level of effectiveness will not be retained unless among other things, action is taken to continue operations in some open cemeteries that would otherwise close due to depletion of available grave space.

Due to the aging of the veteran population, veteran deaths will increase dramatically to a peak occurring about the year 2010. In order to meet these identified increasing needs and to allow equitable access to burial benefits, implementation of the five-point plan identified in the preceding chapter is required.

Ten geographic areas in the United States in which the need for additional burial space for veterans is greatest have been identified in order of priority in this report. However, this identification process does not constitute the establishment of policy for expansion nor does the report imply that construction of new national cemeteries at any or all of the identified locations should take place.

Present policy for expansion of the National Cemetery System is under the regional concept which will culminate with the opening of Fort Mitchell National Cemetery. This report identifies the need for reviewing current policy to address expansion/non-expansion. Plans for this review are being developed.

In doing so, the effectiveness of past expansion will be evaluated, the degree to which service should be made available will be identified and costs related to future expansion if any, will be developed. Resulting policy will provide clear direction for future efforts of the National Cemetery System.

State veteran cemeteries developed with assistance from Federal funds through the State Cemetery Grants Program are complementing the National Cemetery System in meeting veterans' burial needs. However, their effectiveness in doing so is limited in some cases by their geographic location and restrictive eligibility requirements. Program improvements should be considered to enhance the contributions which State veteran cemeteries can make from the national perspective, while at the same time making the program more appealing to States. The grant program should be promoted to encourage State participation in the delivery of veterans' burial benefits.

Planning for the National Cemetery System within the confines of existing policy will proceed to meet identified immediate needs of veterans and their dependents. This will be accomplished through recognition of and response to changes in burial trends and customs, systematic development of land already in the inventory, and limited and selective expansion of existing national cemeteries.

The period covered in this report will bring unprecedented demands for meeting veterans' burial needs. It represents a challenge and opportunity for the National Cemetery System.

EFFECTIVENESS OF VETERAN POPULATION COVERAGE

	PRESENT POPULATION	CUMULATIVE COVERAGE	YEAR 1990 POPULATION	CUMULATIVE COVERAGE	YEAR 2000 POPULATION	CUMULATIVE COVERAGE	YEAR 2020 POPULATION	CUMULATIVE COVERAGE
ESTIMATED TOTAL VETERAN POPULATION:	27,777,000	N/A	26,914,000	N/A	23,951,000	N/A	16,917,000	N/A
EXISTING OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES :	19,235,276	69.2%	16,719,777	62.1%	14,397,777	60.1%	8,249,110	48.8%
GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF NEED:								
CHICAGO, IL (1) :			662,026	64.6%	550,556	62.4%	366,669	50.9%
SAN FRANCISCO, CA (2) :			906,032	68.3%	830,004	65.9%	531,076	54.1%
MIAMI-FT. LAUDERDALE, FL (3) :			535,481	70.2%	510,163	68.0%	330,101	56.1%
CLEVELAND-AKRON-CANTON, OH (4) :			719,446	72.9%	605,742	70.6%	431,249	58.6%
DETROIT, MI (5) :			561,712	75.0%	467,709	72.5%	340,133	60.6%
PITTSBURGH, PA (6) :			350,304	76.3%	296,607	73.8%	204,939	61.8%
DALLAS-FT. WORTH, TX (7) :			556,131	78.4%	531,122	76.0%	381,333	64.3%
SEATTLE-TACOMA, WA (8) :			337,481	79.7%	305,581	77.3%	209,230	65.3%
ALBANY-UTICA, NY (9) :			290,996	80.8%	258,700	78.3%	188,096	66.5%
OKLAHOMA CITY-LAWTON, OK (10):			321,656	81.6%	284,428	79.2%	148,974	67.3%

NOTES: Priorities are established on the basis of gross number of veterans residing within the service area of each location.

Effectiveness is indicated on the basis of estimated net veterans served; i.e., veterans not residing within the service areas of open national cemetery.

APPENDIX II

NET VETERANS SERVED IN YEAR 2000

	YEAR 2000 POPULATION	CUMULATIVE POPULATION	CUMULATIVE COVERAGE
TOTAL VETERAN POPULATION :	23,951,000	N/A	N/A
EXISTING OPEN NATIONAL CEMETERIES :	14,397,777	N/A	60.1%
SAN FRANCISCO, CA	838,084	15,235,861	63.6%
CLEVELAND-AKRON-CANTON, OH	605,742	15,841,603	66.1%
CHICAGO, IL	550,556	16,392,159	68.4%
DALLAS-FT. WORTH, TX	531,122	16,923,281	70.7%
MIAMI-FT. LAUDERDALE, FL	510,163	17,433,444	72.8%
DETROIT, MI	467,709	17,901,153	74.7%
SEATTLE-TACOMA, WA	305,581	18,206,734	76.0%
PITTSBURGH, PA	296,607	18,503,341	77.3%
ALBANY-UTICA, NY	258,708	18,762,049	78.3%
OKLAHOMA CITY-LAWTON, OK	204,428	18,966,477	79.2%

NOTE: Priorities are established on the basis of estimated net veterans residing within service area of each location.

APPENDIX III

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

Activities at national cemeteries (interments conducted and gravesites used) are reported monthly by national cemetery directors and data are collected through the Automated Management Information System (AMIS). Data representing activities at operating State veterans cemeteries for this report are collected manually from the controlling State offices.

Raw statistical and demographic data are compiled and provided by the VA's Office of Information Management and Statistics. This information includes present and projected veteran populations and deaths by county, veteran migration, and trends in veterans age groups.

Raw statistical and demographic data are incorporated into national cemetery planning through application of trends already established at operating cemeteries. Projections of activities are developed by applying estimated veteran participation rates in geographic areas to total estimated veteran deaths.

Although specific statistical data is provided by the Office of Information Management and Statistics and is generated in-house for application to national cemetery planning, information is often reported in rounded figures in the report for easier reading and comprehension.

Information related to projections of veteran populations and deaths are reported for milestone years through the year 2020, the period of operations covered by this report. Occasionally, projections are extended to 2030 to better demonstrate trends. Historical data related to activities in national cemeteries are cumulative through Fiscal Year 1986. Projected activities are for milestone years through 2020.

The identification and reporting of ten (10) geographic areas with need for veteran burial space are based on conditions that will exist in 1990. This year is selected since it is only three (3) years hence and provides even decade segments through the period covered by the report; i.e., 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2020. Establishment of decade segments allows comparative analysis of trends throughout the report period.